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EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918





BY WALTER C. BENTLEY

THE DOUBLE ROSE

AN NOVEL IN
THREE VOLUMES

CHARLES C. BENTLEY, NEW YORK

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILL.

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Published by the



J. H. Chance Newton Esq
With the Author

THE DOUBLE ROSE

Kind regards

Jan 19. 1905.

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THE DOUBLE ROSE

*AN HISTORICAL PLAY
IN FIVE ACTS . . .*

By J. WIMSETT BOULDING

*Author of "The Kingmaker,"
"Harold the Saxon," "The
White Queen," and other plays*

First played at the Adelphi Theatre, London

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*LONDON: FARROLD & SONS
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FROM
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1918

*OTHER PLAYS OF MR. BOULDING'S WILL FOLLOW
IN DUE COURSE.*

23-85

CHARACTERS.

RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER	-	<i>Afterwards Richard III.</i>
HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND	-	<i>Afterwards Henry VII.</i>
LORD STANLEY	- - -	<i>His step-father.</i>
THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM	-	<i>Brother-in-law to the Queen.</i>
EARL RIVERS	- - -	<i>Brother to the Queen.</i>
CARDINAL BOURCHIER	- -	<i>Archbishop of Canterbury.</i>
THE ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER	-	
EDWARD THE FOURTH	- -	<i>King of England.</i>
EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES	-	} <i>His Sons</i>
RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK	-	
HUMPHREY BRERETON	- -	<i>Esquire to Lord Stanley.</i>
A MONK	- - - -	
A MESSENGER FROM THE COUNCIL		
SIR JAMES TYRREL	- - -	
1ST CITIZEN	- - - -	
2ND CITIZEN	- - - -	
ELIZABETH	- - - -	<i>Queen of England.</i>
THE LADY ELIZABETH	- -	<i>Her daughter, afterwards wife of Henry VII.</i>
A SISTER OF THE CHURCH	- -	
BRIDGET	- - - -	<i>A waiting woman.</i>
SOLDIERS.	PAGES.	ATTENDANTS.



BUCKINGHAM.

'Tis but exchange of flouts. So keep
Your temper, Brother Anthony.

RIVERS.

What mean you ?

BUCKINGHAM.

Your memory is older than your title,
Or 'twould be still fresh in't, what insolence
The ancient peers and barons of this Realm
Have suffered at the tongues and at the hands
Of all your kindred. Being of that old race
I've suffered it ; but, being your brother-in-law,
I bear it not like them—in sullen silence
Shut in their castles and baronial halls ;
But in the Court here, openly,
I tell you of it to your face, Lord Rivers ;
It is a brother's privilege to be plain.

*Enter during the latter part of this dialogue
LORD STANLEY. He is a man of middle age,
of a grave and serious demeanour. He is
attended by BRERETON. BRERETON is a
young man of soldierly bearing, but
humorous in style.*

STANLEY.

[*Coming down between them.*]
As usual when you meet—flint and steel !
Now were I but the tinder 'twixt you twain,
Why what a conflagration there would be !
Thank Heaven, I am not so inflammable.



J. H. Chance Newton Esq
With the Author

THE DOUBLE ROSE

Kind regards

Jan 19. 1905.

ELIZABETH.

[*To the White Rose.*]

You ought to blush, my dear !

[*Then to Red Rose.*]

And you turn pale.

You naughty, naughty thing !

[*Sighing.*]

Ah, Nature meant

That you should set each other's beauty off,
 Like two fair sisters, in whose separate charms
 The sun and moon are rivals, setting forth
 Her love of contrast, law of loveliness—
 The union of difference. You may well
 Hang down your heads. You shall do penance both.
 Not one small drop of water shall you have
 To cheer your fainting courage. Yes, you shall,
 For now you both look penitent. Dear things,
 I'll make a posy of you—*tie you up* !
 And stand you both in the same vase, like two
 Bad creatures set up in the stocks ; or two
 Good creatures standing at the altar—joined,
 Wedded and made one. O how brave you look
 Together. [*To Red.*] You're the blushing Bride-
 groom, sir.

[*To White.*] And you the pale and delicate little
 Bride.

What say you if I make you two young prophets—
 Young witches, p'raps would be a better name—
 And make you tell the fortunes of great *England* ?
 As ye are, so shall England be anon—
 And *more* than ye—a white rose *veined* with red,
 A red rose *flaked* with white—a Double Rose ;
 And there shall be nor York nor Lancaster,
 But only England ! [*Sings. If the artiste cannot
 sing, she may recite the verses as a poem.*]

SONG.

I:

My love, he is the Red Rose,
My dear, he loves the White:
Dark sea between that flows
And hides him from my sight.

II.

O shrink, thou envious sea,
Into a narrow stream;
And bring my love to me
As in a gentle dream.

III.

O cruel battles, cease!
O age of bloodshed, close!
And 'midst a land at peace
Flourish the Double Rose!

During the song, RICHMOND has entered and stood listening to the LADY ELIZABETH, then comes forward. RICHMOND is a young-looking man of about thirty years of age.

RICHMOND.

A sweet song, Bessie! Very sweetly sung!*

ELIZABETH.

[*Aside.*] Richmond! [*To him.*] I knew not I'd a listener!

RICHMOND.

'Tis well thou told'st no secrets, sweetheart mine!

* If the song is not sung, the artiste must say, "Sweet verses, Bessie—very sweetly said."

ELIZABETH.

How cam'st thou here, and that so suddenly?
I thought thou wast in Brittany.

RICHMOND.

I am
In Brittany, sweetheart, to all but thee. [*Kissing her.*]

Ah! Exile from my country might be borne,
But from my love?—ah, no! So secretly
I journeyed, shielded by a foreign name;
And Stanley, my good step-father, contrived
To bring me with him here. So that while he
Holds Edward in close converse, I might hold
His daughter in the same—only perhaps
A little closer. [*Embracing her tenderly.*]

ELIZABETH.

I would thou could'st live here!
How cruel 'tis to drive thee forth from home!

RICHMOND.

I am too near the Crown to live in peace
Or safety here.

ELIZABETH.

But thou would'st not conspire
Against my father?

RICHMOND.

Never, for his daughter's sake.
But there are bold and restless spirits, Bess,
Who would conspire *for* me against my will;
And peace were none, sweetheart, for thee or me.

ELIZABETH.

Will it be always so?—and shall our lives
Be sundered ever by the cold, deep sea?
O would I were a Shepherdess, and thou
A Shepherd piping all the summer day
On some still mound or by some whispering stream—
Then were our loves as happy as the birds
That mate and build, and sing the long day through.
Why was I born the daughter of a King,
And thou an heir to his contested crown?

RICHMOND.

Perchance in time men may forget to urge
My rival claim, and I be left at peace
To urge *no* claim except the innocent one,
Which thou permittest, to this loving hand.
[*Kissing it.*]

ELIZABETH.

Oh, would it might be so! Pray, Henry, pray
It *may* be so! What joy it were to feel
That I had ended this long, weary strife
By blending White and Red Rose—twining them
In wreaths of a victorious bridal peace
Around my father's throne.

RICHMOND.

That were indeed
A joy, to which the wearing of a crown
Were a poor mockery. But now farewell.
Meanwhile I am content to know thy heart
Is mine. Though I shall never rest until
I can proclaim thy hand is also mine.

ELIZABETH.

O must thou go so soon ?

RICHMOND.

Sweetheart, I must,
Although it breaks my heart to say "I must !"

ELIZABETH.

And thou must go to Brittany again ?

RICHMOND.

And tarry there until these strifes have ceased,
And thou can'st bid me come in open day
To be the husband of King Edward's daughter.

ELIZABETH.

Farewell ! farewell ! O what a heavy word
Is that *farewell*. It falls asleep, and dies
Upon my tongue for very weariness
And wofulness.

*Enter EDWARD THE FOURTH. He is a tall man,
though now somewhat bent with illness, and
walks languidly. He does not recognise
RICHMOND, but looks at him enquiringly for
a moment, while RICHMOND whispers to her.*

RICHMOND.

Call me the "Count of Flanders."
[*Aloud to ELIZABETH.*] Adieu.

ELIZABETH.

Adieu, Monsieur le Comte
De Flandre. [*Aside to him.*] Henry, dear, farewell !
farewell !

RICHMOND.

Saved by a miracle.

[*He goes out.*]

EDWARD.

Who was that man?

ELIZABETH.

A foreign Count, I heard him call himself.
A friend, I think, of one of the good Lords
That came to enquire about your health to-day.

EDWARD.

[*Noticing her.*]

Dear Bessie, why dost sigh? What has disturbed
Thine innocent mirth and filled thy gentle heart
With sorrow?

ELIZABETH.

Did I sigh? I do not think

I sighed.

EDWARD.

Ah, Bessie, you forget how close
A father's ear is to a daughter's heart!

ELIZABETH.

Well, if I must confess, that foreign Count
Reminded me of one who is an exile
From England and from me. Oh, father, why
Must Henry Richmond be so? He seeks not
To take thy crown or anything that's thine!

EDWARD.

Not *anything*? Then *thou'rt* not anything.
O, little Nothing! pretty, precious Nothing
That art so much to *me*! [*Kissing her.*] But, jests
apart,

I would thou had'st not set thy heart on Henry ;
Belike, thou wilt have set it, child, for nought.

ELIZABETH.

Oh, why ?

EDWARD.

Thou seest he will not come to us.
I have invited him, once, twice, nay thrice ;
But still he comes not. He suspects us, child :
He will not trust the hospitality
Of the White Rose. Ah, well, if he prefer
Captivity—for 'tis no better, Bess—
Captivity, I say, to Francois, Duke
Of Brittany, to be our honoured guest
In England, he has but himself to thank
For exile from his country and from *thee*.
We must contrive some better match for thee.

ELIZABETH.

No, father, have a little patience yet.
Thou must make some allowance for his fears—
He is the last of the Lancastrian line.

EDWARD.

Tut, foolish wench ! Make no excuse for him—
I'll hear none.

ELIZABETH.

Now I have vexed thee, father—
Forgive me.

EDWARD.

[*Kissing her.*] I forgive thee ; but no more
Of these apologies, or by the saints,
I shall be wroth indeed with thee.

ELIZABETH.

[*Aside.*]

Alas !

The memories of these wars thrust sudden thorns
Into our peaceful hours, our tenderest loves.

[*Exit ELIZABETH, weeping.*]

EDWARD.

'The last of the Lancastrian line. He is.
Yes, he's the only thorn that now is left
On the stripped, naked stem of the Red Rose
To prick my head and make my crown sit on't
Uneasily. Moreover, there's a saying—
An ancient prophecy—that has been current
Since Agincourt was fought by the fifth Henry,
Which tells that out of Brittany shall come
Richmond to conquer England. What if *he*—
Young Harry Richmond—now *in* Brittany,
Should be that one ? By Heaven, it irks me much !

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

GLOUCESTER.

Good morrow to my sovereign liege.

EDWARD.

Ah, Richard !

GLOUCESTER.

[*Narrowly observing him.*]

What is the matter ? You appear excited.

EDWARD.

'Tis nothing ; only I am not so strong
As once I was. I envy me the days
When I could swing my battle-axe, and feel
'Twas light as a child's bauble. I could scarce
Uplift it now—although the spirit within
Is bold and brave as ever.

GLOUCESTER.

"Tis that ague
You caught in the French marshes when you fled
Both Crown and England from the power—

EDWARD.

[*Starting up.*] No more,
Unless you seek to kill me with a blow. [*Sits.*]

GLOUCESTER.

Brother, forgive me ! That day's shame I ween,
If shame it were, was blotted out with glory
In Barnet's final and victorious fight.

EDWARD.

It was ! it was ! I thank you, brother Richard,
You've made me well again ; but you were right—
'Twas those French marshes. Yes, I owe this
weakness,
As I owe every other ill I've suffered,
To the Red Rose. But there's still one left
Of that vile brood that troubles me.

GLOUCESTER.

And he ?

EDWARD.

Need you ask that ?

GLOUCESTER.

Henry of Richmond ! Yes,
I too do often think of *him* ! But courage !
Remember how we've cleared the viper's nest.
Run o'er the names, and let each one be like
A cordial to your heart. Henry the King—
I mean the King so called. Edward his son—

I gave him *his* quietus. Clarence the traitor—
 Forgive me that I call him no more brother—
 A brother is no traitor. If he be
 He is no longer brother in *my* creed.
 And last, and mightiest, that King of Rebels
 The Earl of Warwick, at whose giant trunk
 We levelled all our axes, each for self,
 And all for York ; and in whose massive bulk
 Crashed down at once the hopes of Lancaster.

EDWARD.

'Tis good to count the triumphs on one's roll.
 They are a warrior's beads ; and they all end
 With *Gloria Patri* ; and exalt the soul
 For victories to come ; but somehow, Richard,
 They do not give *me* joy as once they did.
 I have a sickness here—here at my heart—
 That even makes the pageants of the Court
 Tedious and wearisome.

GLOUCESTER.

[*Aside.*] Death's in that look !
 There'll be more work anon. Richard, prepare !
 The Crown's about to tumble. When it falls
 These hands must guide it to the *right* head.
 [*Touching his own significantly.*] Ha !
 The Queen ! I'll take my leave, my gracious liege !
 I see your wife, our loving Queen, approaches.
 Courage, good brother ! You will soon be well.

GLOUCESTER, *pointing down as he goes out significantly, and repeating* "Soon be well."
Enter the QUEEN. The QUEEN is a very young-looking woman, with masses of golden brown hair ; in fact, much younger in

appearance than women are at her comparatively early age. She observes the KING'S weary attitude and dejected countenance, and approaches him lovingly.

QUEEN.

Thou seemest weaker, sweetheart ! I had hoped
These airs of gentle April would bring back
The roses to thy cheeks, and to these eyes
The brightness they have seemed to lack so long.

EDWARD.

Alas, dear Bessie, April skies to me
Look cheerless as December. I have lost
The April in the heart.

QUEEN.

Dear husband mine,
Oh, say not so ! 'Tis but a passing sickness,
Thou'lt soon be well again.

EDWARD.

Yes, very soon,
If loving looks and gentle words, dear Bess,
Have skill in healing arts.

QUEEN.

Whom should I tend
With loving looks and gentle words but thee ?
For thou art all I have in the wide world.

EDWARD.

Ah ! there thou strik'st a trembling string in me,
I fear it is as true as it is sad.
'Thou'dst find the world but cold to thee, dear wife,
If I were gone, thou, and my darling babes :
Heaven knows what would become of thee and them.

QUEEN.

O do not speak so mournfully, dear love !
You frighten me.

EDWARD.

"Tis well that we should talk
Of these things, sweetheart, lest some sudden change
Should take us unawares. Truth then to tell,
I do not sometimes think—Nay, do not weep :
Thou hast not yet heard what I have to say.
I sometimes think I shall not be again
The man I was. Mark me, I do not say
I shall die *now* ! It may be weeks or months ;
Would that it might be years—that I might see
My son of age to take my place ; but, no,
I never shall see that. Never !

QUEEN.

Dear heart,
Have courage ! thou'rt still young ; and ofttimes youth
That has sunk down exhausted on the road
Starts up and gives old Death a chase, e'en when
He stood above him with uplifted dart,
And thought his victim sure.

EDWARD.

It may be so ;
But 'tis not death I dread ; I have faced *him*
Too often in the field to fear him now.
It is for thee, dear Bessie, and our babes.

QUEEN.

Would England harm the children of the King
She is so proud of and so fondly loves ?

EDWARD.

Pride is a fleeting passion, Love a dream.
Men lay their tributes on our sepulchres,
And their love withers ere the flowers are dead.
Besides, bethink thee of the bitterness
That rankles in our Court. The seeds I've sown
Be sure they'll come to harvest on my grave.
I often think I've acted foolishly
Advancing new men and neglecting old—
The ancient lords and barons of the realm,
Who, when I'm here no longer to protect,
Will knock the new men down, as you knock down
The closheys for your pastime. The *old* nobles—
They would have stood like bulwarks round my throne
And guarded it for Edward and my line.

QUEEN.

But we are strong enough to cope with them.

EDWARD.

Strength must be tested, Bessie, to be known :
But there are surer remedies than force
To quell these factions. Gentle measures, wife,
Are a more sovereign strength than arms.

QUEEN.

Ah, now,

I *know* you're ill. You must be very ill ;
Or the proud victor of the bloody fields
Of Tooton, Barnet Heath, and Tewkesbury
Would never think of wielding any weapon
Lighter than sword or battle-axe.

EDWARD.

No, Bess,

I had that virtue, and that vice of youth
As much as any boy I ever knew—
The love of fighting ; but those days are past,
And now I'd fain undo by Gentleness
Much that I've done by Force. But ah ! I find
'Tis easier to do than undo. Wounds
A moment makes a life may fail to heal.

QUEEN.

What will you do ?

EDWARD.

All that within me lies
To reconcile the nobles in whose breasts
I've lit those fires of enmity in which,
When I'm no longer here to guard thy head,
Thou, and thy house, my children, and my line
May be destroyed together.

[*The merry VOICES OF CHILDREN are heard outside.*

Hark ! their voices !

Sweet, innocent lambs, that fear no ill and know
No wrong. What would I not give, *for-give*, do,
Or bear to save you from the storm I see
Gathering above my grave !

Enter PRINCE EDWARD and RICHARD, running in merrily. RICHARD has a little boat in his hand.

PRINCE EDWARD.

O father, dear !

'Tis such a lovely day. Do take a sail
With us upon the river.

PRINCE RICHARD.

And help me
To sail my boat. [*Holding it up.*
Isn't it a brave one, father?

EDWARD.

Happy children !
How cruel 'tis to cloud their careless mirth.
[*To PRINCE EDWARD.*]
Come here, dear boy. If father were to die
And they should make you King, what would you do ?

PRINCE EDWARD.

I would take care of mother. [*Going to her.*

PRINCE RICHARD.

I would help him.

QUEEN.

The dear children. [*She kisses them.*

EDWARD.

Brave little men you are !
That's right ; that's just what I would have you do.
And, Richard, always think of what you've said ;
Let none persuade you to be made a King
While Edward is alive. Always *help* him ;
But never try to take or touch his crown.

PRINCE RICHARD.

Father, I will not ; though he often tries
To take my boat away ; but that's in sport—
I know he would not take it from me, would you ?
[PRINCE EDWARD *shakes his head.*

PRINCE EDWARD.

But, mother, father is not going to die, is he?

QUEEN.

No, dear, I hope not.

EDWARD.

But we never know. [*Pausing.*

And would you make your soldiers fight?

PRINCE EDWARD.

[*After thinking a little while.*] I think
I would not make them fight the English, father,
Only the French.

EDWARD.

Ah! if you keep to that
You'll be a happier king than I have been.

PRINCE EDWARD.

Now, father, take us up the river, will you?
I'm sure it will not hurt you. 'Tis so warm
And pleasant in the sun; and there's no wind.

PRINCE RICHARD.

Yes, do.

PRINCE EDWARD.

Only a little way.

PRINCE RICHARD.

As far

As Greenwich.

No, that is too *far*.

PRINCE RICHARD.

The Tower then.

PRINCE EDWARD.

Yes, take us to the Tower. Why don't we live
More often at the Tower? I like the Tower.

PRINCE RICHARD.

And so do I. Do go and take us through
The Dungeons.

EDWARD.

Dungeons! Well, that's a brave walk
For a sick man.

QUEEN.

Richard, you have an eye
For the appropriate.

EDWARD.

Sad deeds have been
Done in the Tower.

PRINCE RICHARD.

'That's why I like it, father ;
Because the old Lieutenant tells me tales.
Oh, they do make me shudder !

QUEEN.

Then you like
Shuddering?

PRINCE RICHARD.

No, but I like tales.

EDWARD.

The Tower
Is a good friend, boys, but an evil master.

QUEEN.

Pray Heaven you may ne'er know it otherwise
Than as a place of pleasance and of gossip.

EDWARD.

[*Puts his hand to his side.*] Oh !

QUEEN.

[*Leaning over him on couch.*]
Dear heart ! How weak he is ! The slightest effort
Brings on these fits of fainting.

EDWARD.

[*Recovering ; to the QUEEN.*] Sweet !
Is the Lord Rivers in the Palace still ?

QUEEN.

He comes. With him His Grace of Buckingham.

EDWARD.

'Tis well. These factious noblemen,
Whom I have set at variance—'tis meet
I heal the breach if that be possible.

*Enter the LORD RIVERS and the DUKE OF
BUCKINGHAM.*

My Lord of Buckingham, it grieves me sore [*Rising.*
To note your discontent.

[BUCKINGHAM *is about to speak.*

Nay, do not speak,
I know what you would say—the fault is mine.
'Tis so ; and humbly I acknowledge it.
Nor should I like to go hence, leaving it

To work its evil when I have no power
To apply the remedy. Will you grant my wish?
'Tis the last favour I shall ever ask you.

BUCKINGHAM.

[*Affected.*]

With all my heart, my gracious, sovereign liege.

EDWARD.

And you, Lord Rivers, stands it in your will
To copy my good lord of Buckingham?

RIVERS.

Your Grace has only to express a wish,
'Twill not be more my law than my delight
To do it to the utmost of my power.

EDWARD.

Then take each other by the hand and swear
That you will be henceforth good friends and true;
And strive to make like amity between
All others like affected. So bring peace
Into our court and realm.

BOTH.

[*Taking each other's hands.*] My liege, we swear!

EDWARD.

The blessing of a dying man be on you.
My lords, you've made me happier to-day
Than all my victories ever did. [*Aside.*] But oh,
My children! 'Tis for them I'm troubled most.
I think the Duke of Gloucester is within?

RIVERS.

Your Grace, we left him in the Hall of Council.

EDWARD.

Go, tell him I desire he come at once.

[RIVERS goes off.]

He has been ever a true, faithful brother ;
In Council Hall and battle-field, alike,
Always beside me and at all times brave,
And wise, and loyal, both to me and mine.
To him will I commit my wife and babes,
And in his hands I know they will be safe.

*Enter the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER and the LADY
ELIZABETH.*

GLOUCESTER.

My sovereign liege, I am not more amazed
Than troubled at this sudden change in you.

EDWARD.

Richard, thou art my nearest, dearest friend,
Brother not more by nature than in love ;
Companion not alone in arms, and friend
In Council Hall, but at my hearth and board
Ever most welcome. Look around this room,
Thou seest my weeping wife and helpless babes
Soon to be husbandless and fatherless :
To thee I do commend them. To my wife
Be thou a ready counsellor and friend ;
To these dear little ones be thou a father ;
They'll need one. Richard, promise thou wilt be
A friend to all of them when I'm no more.

GLOUCESTER.

I swear by all the Holy Evangelists,
I will.

EDWARD.

It is a sacred promise.

[*To the QUEEN.*] Wife,

Behold thy brother !

RICHARD *advances, kneels and kisses the QUEEN's hand.*

[*To ELIZABETH.*] Dear Elizabeth,
Thy Uncle will protect and comfort thee.

RICHARD *advances to ELIZABETH and embraces her tenderly.*

GLOUCESTER.

Trust in me, Bess, no harm shall come to thee.

EDWARD.

[*To EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES.*]

Edward, my son, confide in Uncle Gloucester ;
Do what he tells thee—'twill be for thy good ;
And learn to love him as thou hast loved me,
And he will be a father to thee.

[*PRINCE EDWARD goes to GLOUCESTER.*]

PRINCE EDWARD.

Uncle,
I'll try to love thee as thy little son.

EDWARD.

[To RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK.]

And thou, my little Richard, pretty boy,
Do as dear Edward does, and thy good Uncle
Will make a man of thee.

RICHARD goes to GLOUCESTER. GLOUCESTER takes
him up in his arms, and kisses him.

My little namesake.

[GLOUCESTER to EDWARD.]

I shall love Edward, brother, for *thy* sake,
And Richard both for *thine* and *mine*.

EDWARD.

Good brother,
I thank thee from my heart. Now all is well.

*The QUEEN and the PRINCES with the LADY
ELIZABETH go over to the KING, who is seen
to sink back as if exhausted on his pillow.
The QUEEN kneels beside him, in front, the
LADY ELIZABETH on the other side, the
PRINCES at his feet.*

EDWARD.

Now let the great Disposer of all lives,
Who opens and shuts up the Book of Fate,
Set His last seal on mine. I shall possess
My soul in peace and patience. [*Rises.*] Thus my sun
That rose in storm, in storm has travelled on
Through life's brief winter day, goes down in calm
And makes a heavenly glory round my grave.

[*Sinks back on the couch fainting.*

GLoucester.

[*Aside.*] His darkness makes my day.

Queen.

Flinging herself upon him in agony.]

Dead ! dead !

*The CHILDREN and the LADY ELIZABETH kneeling
and bending over him.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Outside Westminster Abbey. Scene set in
Second Grooves.*

Enter Two CITIZENS.

FIRST CITIZEN.

These be strange doings of his Grace of
Gloucester.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ay, and villainous.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Taking the young Prince and carrying him to the
Tower.

Enter BRIDGET [*overhearing.*] BRIDGET is a
middle-aged woman of quaint appearance.

BRIDGET.

And what is there strange or villainous in that?
Isn't the Tower a safe place?

CITIZENS.

Very! [*significantly.*]

BRIDGET.

Secure from all kidnappers.

CITIZENS.

Quite !

BRIDGET.

There was no need for your tongues to be wagging then.

CITIZENS.

Nor for yours.

BRIDGET.

My tongue is my own, and it will wag when it will.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Whom serve you, old lady ?

BRIDGET.

A better man than you ; and a greater, and a handsomer.

CITIZENS.

Who ? who ?

BRIDGET.

His Grace of Gloucester.

CITIZENS.

Handsomer ? In face or back ! which ?

BRIDGET.

Revile you his Grace ? Speak you ill of his person ? Take care ! Take care !

Enter HUMPHREY BRERETON.

BRERETON.

Or he may give you a sore back for your pains.

BRIDGET.

Indeed, and he may, as the gentleman protests.

BRERETON.

He may, in short, twist you about till you get a crook in *your* back.

BRIDGET.

Indeed, and he may, as the gentleman protests.

BRERETON.

He may torture you, in brief, till you get a hump there.

BRIDGET.

Indeed, and he may, as the gentleman protests.

BRERETON.

And so he may make you exactly *like himself*, which would be the worst calamity that could possibly befall you.

BRIDGET.

Eh ? Oh, I see ! You are scurrilous, sir, like the rest. You are making game of my master. Get you out, sir ; or I shall report you, sir, for a scurrilous knave.

BRERETON.

Report me ? No ! A soldier must have his jest. And when his sword is in, his tongue will be out.

BRIDGET.

Whose *man* are you ? Whom serve you, young gentleman ?

BRERETON.

A better, a greater, a handsomer, than——
myself!

BRIDGET.

He were bad, and little, and ill-favoured, if he
were no better than you.

BRERETON.

Now *you* are jesting.

BRIDGET.

In faith I am not.

BRERETON.

Saw you ever a straighter back, a shapelier leg, a
comelier countenance, or a brighter eye?

BRIDGET.

Saw I ever a vainer coxcomb? I would I were a
man, I would take thee down, I warrant me.

BRERETON.

But being a woman, I prithee take me *in*.

BRIDGET.

What dost thou think me? A common light o'
love?

BRERETON.

No, I think thee an uncommon love o' light.

BRIDGET.

Indeed, and I am; and as the light is gone, and it
is nearly dark, I bid thee good day.

BRERETON.

How can you bid me good day when there *is no*
day ?

BRIDGET.

Good night then, Master Wit.

BRERETON.

Take me with you, and it *will* be good night.

BRIDGET.

O scurrilous knave ! O, street walking monster !
A villain by my faith ! A very villain ! [*She goes off.*]

BRERETON.

A good dame ! By my troth an honest dame, and
a virtuous withal ? [*To the Citizens.*] Saw you ever
a better ?

CITIZENS.

Never ! [*Laughing.*]

FIRST CITIZEN.

And most suitable for the household of his Grace
of Gloucester.

BRERETON.

As a candle in a dark cellar, or a lily on a foul
dunghill, or a box of perfume in a bundle of rags.
[*Calls after her.*] Keep it up, honest dame ! Keep
it up ! You are the right woman in the right
place. [*BRERETON goes off.*]

[*CITIZENS go off, laughing.*]

SCENE 2.—*The Sanctuary at Westminster. As the Curtain rises the solemn strains of the Organ, and the chanting of the Monks, are heard in the neighbouring Abbey. A MONK is discovered in the Hall telling his rosary.*

MONK.

Hark ! 'Tis the solemn requiem for the soul
Of our dead King. [*Crosses himself.*]

Heaven give him rest !

The sounds of the Organ and the chanting of the Monks gradually die away. Then enter the ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER. The MONK receives him with a low reverence.

ABBOT.

Great Edward ! Matchless warrior ! Mighty King !
Dead in thy prime. Thy sun has set at noon
And left thy country dark and desolate.
Whate'er thou wast, thou wast a worthy scion
Of the great House of York ; worthy to be
Progenitor of a race of hero-kings.
England does well to honour thee in death
And pay her homage at thy sepulchre.
The Church shall aid thee with her pious rites,
And daily chant her requiems for thy soul.
Thy faults lie buried with thy bones and none
Recall them more. Thy virtues live and flourish,
And make thy memory fragrant for all Time.

[*A loud knocking is heard.*]

Who knocks so loudly and importunate ?

The MONK goes to the door and opens it. Then enter hastily, her hair disordered and flowing in ample tresses over her shoulders, the QUEEN, with the LADY ELIZABETH and RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK. The little prince is led by the QUEEN. She falls on her knees before the ABBOT, her son and daughter kneeling one on either side of her.

QUEEN.

Have pity, reverend father, on your Queen.
Nay, no Queen now, only a desolate woman
Who flies to you for shelter and protection.

ABBOT.

Laying his hands on her head. Afterwards on the head of the LADY ELIZABETH and PRINCE RICHARD.

Bless thee, my daughter. Thou art ever welcome
To our poor house and hospitality.
And as for Holy Church, her sacred arms
Are always open to receive the needy
To their inviolate shelter and repose.

QUEEN.

We thank thee, holy father. [*Rising.*] And in faith
'Tis not the first time I have had to thank
This sacred Abbey and its reverend band
For a secure and comfortable refuge.
Well I remember thirteen years ago,
Compass'd by perils and pursued by foes,
I found a safe and charitable haven
Amidst your pious brotherhood. Ye fed

Me and my children at your generous board,
 And but for you—a crowned Queen though I was—
 We had e'en died for lack of food and home.
 And when my trouble came on me, and I
 Brought forth my firstborn son, the Prince of Wales,
 Ye ministered to my necessities
 And saved alike the mother and the child.
 This blessèd sanctuary! How dear it is
 To *me* thou canst not know; made sacred by
 A mother's holy love. Forgive me, father,
 If I profess, in coming to your roof,
 I feel that I am only coming *home*!

ABBOT.

Home may it be, dear daughter! Home alike
 To body and to soul—image and pledge
 Of yon bright home and better sanctuary.

[*After a pause.*
 But tell me! Wherefore dost thou fly to me?

QUEEN.

Hast thou not heard? His Grace the Duke of
 Gloucester

Has taken Earl Rivers and Sir Richard Grey
 Into arrest; and 'gainst our will and pleasure
 Seized on the person of my son—the *King*,
 And carried him by force into the Tower.
 When I heard this, I felt it meant no good
 To me and mine, and to 'scape further ill,
 I instantly resolved to fly to thee,
 And wait the issue of these ominous deeds
 In the security of thy protection.

ABBOT.

And shalt obtain it. Here at least is peace
 Though all the world without be tossed with storm,

And London's streets grow red with blood and
flame :

No tyrant durst invade this hallowed place,
Chartered by God and His vicegerent angels ;
For the dread curse of all-prevailing Rome,
That shakes the thrones of tyrants to their base,
Its Altar guards, as with the flaming sword,
Of the great cherubim.

*The door is now suddenly thrown open and
enter a company of armed men led by
SIR JAMES TYRREL, with the DUKE OF
GLOUCESTER. The QUEEN and LADY
ELIZABETH start back with terror, and
the PRINCE clings to his mother's skirts.
The ABBOT seizes a Crucifix, holding it
up with a dignified and defiant attitude.*

ABBOT.

Back in the name of God !

Or fear the curse of Rome !

*At which all bow and go out except the DUKE OF
GLOUCESTER and TYRREL.*

QUEEN.

Ah, it is he !

[The DUKE bows to the ABBOT. Then —

GLOUCESTER.

My lord and reverend father, by your leave
I would have speech in private with the Queen.

*ABBOT bows and withdraws with the LADY
ELIZABETH. The LADY ELIZABETH, as she*

goes out, turns, and holds out her arms to the PRINCE. He, however, refuses her invitation, and runs to his mother, with whom he remains.

GLOUCESTER.

I come at your dear son's request, the Prince of Wales.

QUEEN.

[*With dignity.*] *My King!* and *thine!* There is no Prince of Wales.

GLOUCESTER.

True, Madam, I forgot. The flower
Has bloomed so recently, I see it still
But in the bud. The *King* has sent to you
By me a sweet and comfortable message—
To wit, his love and greetings to his mother ;
Together with a small request, or wish,
Or would you rather I should say *command* ?

QUEEN.

I know not wherefore you have taken him
Out of my charge.

GLOUCESTER.

To have him crowned withal.

QUEEN.

Methinks our Palace here at Westminster,
Is nearer to the Abbey than the Tower.

GLOUCESTER.

'Tis good that he should somewhat realise
His kingly independence ; which, good sister,

Under your favour, he might fail to do,
Tied to his mother's skirts.

QUEEN.

[*Curtseying with mock reverence.*] But will do better
Bound to his uncle's baldric.

GLOUCESTER.

Madam, his father
Left him to my protection.

QUEEN.

But did not
Send him *therefore* from *mine*.

GLOUCESTER.

We waste our time.
I am his uncle ; by his father's will
His guardian ; and I mean to exercise
A guardian's *privilege* if I bear the *labour*.

QUEEN.

It is enough. See that you do your task
With justice to the living and the *dead*.
Now, my lord Duke, your message.

GLOUCESTER.

Briefly then,
The King commands that you dispatch by me
His younger brother, Richard, Duke of York.

QUEEN.

My son ! My other son !

RICHARD.

[*Clinging closely to her.*] No, mother dear!
Do not send me away.

QUEEN.

[*To GLOUCESTER.*] Wherefore, my lord?

GLOUCESTER.

To make him sport withal.

QUEEN.

To make him sport?

GLOUCESTER.

Ay, truly. Did you then imagine, madam,
The accident that made your son a king
Made him a *man*? No. By your favour, sister,
Men are not made so easily as kings.
That's Nature's work; and Nature's in no hurry.
Blame *her* then, not his *uncle*, if the King
Is crying for his playmate.

QUEEN.

Playmate, Gloucester!

GLOUCESTER.

I said so. P'r'aps to play at kings. [*Aside*] 'Tis all
Of king he'll ever play, I warrant.

QUEEN.

Oh

This is your way forsooth of teaching him
To realise his kingly independence!
Under *your* favour, I had thought your pupil
Would have had other and more manly tasks,

To make him meet for the approaching day
On which he takes the burden of a crown.

GLOUCESTER.

'Tis not my fault that he's not only *child*,
But *childish*, madam.

QUEEN.

That, sir, is he not.
A manlier youth, a kinglier, I dare say,
Woman nor Queen was e'er the mother of.

GLOUCESTER.

Quite natural his mother should think so.

QUEEN.

I think so and I know it, Uncle Gloucester;
And had he been in *my* charge he'd been set
To worthier lessons, and his mind engaged
With higher thoughts than asking for a playmate.

GLOUCESTER.

Doubtless! You would have given him, for instance,
As a preliminary exercise,
How to keep all the Woodvilles *in* the Court,
And for a second lesson, how to keep
All other persons *out*.

QUEEN.

Certainly

Had I been uncle to the youth and guardian,
Boasting moreover of the privilege,
And sensible of the labour—bound and charged
By every sense of duty and of honour,
Not only for the welfare of the State
And the child's good, but for my own repute

And character, to fit his opening mind
 For his exalted rank and royal duties,
 I had not seen my *own manhood* so vanquished
 By a child's foolish importunity,
 That the first proof and fruit of all my pains
 Had been a whining message to his mother—
 "Send me a little playmate!"

GLOUCESTER.

[*Angrily.*] Truce to talk!
 Will you dispatch with me, the Duke of York?

QUEEN.

No.

GLOUCESTER.

No, madam? I have the authority
 Of Council in desiring he attend
 Upon his Sovereign.

QUEEN.

I have yet to learn
 The Council has authority to take
 An infant from his mother's care against
 That mother's will.

GLOUCESTER.

As *his protector*, then,
 And legal guardian, equally with the King,
 I shall demand his presence on my *own*
 Authority. [*Advancing with a peremptory and*
threatening air.]
 Which, since it strikes 'gainst yours,
 I must e'en exercise by force.

[*Attempts to seize the DUKE*
 OF YORK; but the QUEEN, by a quick movement, inter-
 cepts him, and shelters her little son in her robes.]

QUEEN.

My lord !

Know you where 'tis you stand ? This holy pile
Is sacred to the griefs of suffering souls,
And none may touch them 'neath its sheltering
shade.

The robber and the blood-stained murderer
Within these hallowed precincts are secure,
How much more then the blessed Innocence
Whose special guardians are the holy angels ?
Lay but thy finger on this trembling child
And I invoke on thee the curse of Rome,
Which has decreed that whoso violates
The Heaven-appointed right of refuge *here*,
Shall be accursed alike of God and man,
And doomed to Hell with Judas !

GLOUCESTER.

[*To TYRREL.*]

Ah ! that curse :

It shakes the man in me. No sovereign yet
That ever sat on England's throne has dared
To challenge it. I dare not be the first,
And lay the stone of my new greatness in it.

TYRREL.

You must try gentler means.

GLOUCESTER.

[*With altered manner.*] What dost thou fear ?

Is not the child safe in my custody ?

Am I not Edward's brother ? Richard's uncle ?

Were I an alien from your blood, methinks

You could not more mistrust my faith and honour.

D

QUEEN.

Did you e'er learn, my lord, a nursery rhyme
When you were little, called the "Babes in the Wood?"
They had an uncle, as I think, my lord.

GLOUCESTER.

Sister,

Since it is manifest that you suspect
My faith and honour both, I have at call
One whose position both in Church and State
You cannot fail to honour as a pledge
Both of the Council's faith and mine.
[To TYRREL.] How skilled am I in the dissembler's
trade,

Who can e'en blind a holy Cardinal
And make him thus invade his *own* domains,
And interpose his scarlet betwixt me
And the avenging curse of outraged Rome.
He shall take on him this authority
Of force; and if the curse come, let it come,
It falls upon my good lord Cardinal.

[*Opens the door.*]

Enter CARDINAL BOURCHIER. GLOUCESTER
presents him, saying :—His Grace, the
Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury.

QUEEN *makes a low reverence to him. He salutes
her with great dignity.*

GLOUCESTER.

My good Lord Cardinal, the Queen is pleased
To doubt the honour of her royal brother;
Perchance your word may have more weight with her.
Wil't please you therefore to declare to her
The pleasure of the Council?

CARDINAL.

Please you, Madam,
It has been thought expedient by the Council—

QUEEN.

[*Interrupting him.*] That it should break my heart.

CARDINAL.

Far from it, Madam,
But inasmuch as our dear lord the King—

QUEEN.

I'm glad you recognise he is your *King*.

CARDINAL.

Most truly so, and trust ere many days
I shall with these hands crown his sacred brows
To the contentment of your Grace and all
True subjects of our realm.

QUEEN.

[*Kisses his hand.*] My reverend father,
Forgive me that I spoke in haste; it was
Through fear of him [*indicating* GLOUCESTER], and
not unfaith in you.

CARDINAL.

Bless you, my daughter.
[*Putting his hands on her head.* *She kneels.*

QUEEN. [*rising.*]

Pray proceed.

CARDINAL.

[*Continues.*]

Our King

Has intimated by his Grace of Gloucester
 His wish to have his brother for his guest
 Pending his Coronation ; and the Council,
 Desiring to obey his royal pleasure,
 Judge it expedient and pronounce by us
 Its prayer, that Richard, Duke of York, your son
 Be sent, under the care of his good uncle,
 To join his liege and brother in the Tower,
 To make him merry with his company,
 And to support him in the royal procession
 To this, our reverend Abbey, to be crowned.

QUEEN.

That I should doubt *your* truth and honesty,
 My good Lord Cardinal, be far from me.
 'Twere an offence not more to you than to
 Our Holy Church and Head. [*She falls on her knees.*]

And yet, my lord,

I pray you bear with me. Think, my good lord,
 Of my bereaved and desolate condition.
 My husband scarcely laid within his grave ;
 My eldest son ta'en from my widowed arms
 Against my will, and as I must believe,
 Against his *own* ; and now you come to me
 To take his younger brother from me too—
 The only son I have to comfort me
 And to remind me of the face that's gone.

[*RICHARD gets close up to her.*]

See how the pretty darling clings to me
 Like a poor nestling 'neath its mother's wing.
 Oh, I conjure you, by my husband's grave,
 A widow's loneliness, a mother's love,

And by the good, kind heart that beats, I know,
Beneath your sacred vestments, do not take
My dearest comfort from me.

*She clasps her child and kisses him, weeping on
his neck. The ARCHBISHOP is seen to be
much moved, then turning to GLOUCESTER.*

CARDINAL.

We must yield.

A mother's heart is Heaven's *most sacred shrine*,
To break it were the direst sacrilege.

GLOUCESTER.

What folly 'tis in *her*, Lord Cardinal,
So to be moved by such a trivial suit.
Were we about to carry him away
Into some foreign land, to give him up
For hostage to some dire, implacable foe,
Or even to send him to the headsman's axe,
She could not more affect to agonise
Upon the separation. Tut, my lord !
'Tis for a few short days at most. And *he*
Goes to the *royal* apartments in the Tower,
Which, as she knows, are *home* to him. So tell her ;

[ARCHBISHOP *is going, when RICHARD touches
him on the arm and he returns.*]

And say moreover that you pledge *your word*
And holy *office* for his safe return.

CARDINAL.

[*Approaching her, touches her gently on the shoulder.*

Madam, how much I reverence your grief,
And venerate your love, 'twere hard to say.

But I assure you on my sacred word
 As Heaven's Ambassador and anointed Priest,
 That for your *grief*, so far as our intent
 Is cause thereof, 'tis causeless ; for your *love*
 'Twill but increase it, ay, and sweeten it
 To send your son hence for a little while ;
 Absence will make him dearer to your heart,
 And lovelier in your eyes when he returns.
 As for his safety, think you I would pawn
 My high authority and holy trust
 To abet a treason ? That be far from me.
 His uncle's faith moreover stands as pledge
 For his safe keeping and good entertainment ;
 Therefore, as you would comfort your dear son
 With the sweet presence of his royal brother,
 And shew your confidence in the Lord Protector
 And all our honourable Council, send
 Your son, by *us*, by *me*. [Holding out his hand.]

QUEEN.

It must be so,

There is no way but this.

RICHARD.

[Clinging to her.] No, mother, dear !
 I do not want to go. You look so sad.

QUEEN.

[Unwinding his arms from her neck.]
 Yes, dear. Go with your uncle.

RICHARD.

Don't cry, mother,

I'll soon be back again.

QUEEN.

Yes, dear, you will.

See! I'm not crying now. Farewell, sweetheart.

They embrace passionately. She delivers him to the ARCHBISHOP. He breaks from the ARCHBISHOP and runs back with open arms, crying, "Mother."

QUEEN.

[Embracing him again.]

One more last kiss before you go. Heaven knows
When next we two shall kiss again.

GLOUCESTER *now seizes RICHARD by the hand and hurries him up the stage.*

[Exit ARCHBISHOP.]

GLOUCESTER.

[Speaking as he goes up.]

Both birds caught in one snare :
A safe Tower lodging and a deep Tower grave
They shall escape no more.

Takes RICHARD on his shoulder, his face towards the audience. RICHARD, terrified, spreading his arms, exclaims

RICHARD.

Mother! Mother!

[The QUEEN rushes up the stage, crying

QUEEN.

My child! My child! O bring me back
My child!

The door is shut in her face by TYRREL and locked. She beats upon it with her hands, then, turning round, sinks down in the centre of the stage in a swoon.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Passage in the Tower. Thick stone walls. Evening. Red light of sunset seen through a grated window at opening. Gradual coming on of night as scene proceeds. Little playthings lying about. The PRINCES are discovered at rising of the curtain.*

EDWARD.

Come, let us play again ! What shall we play ?

RICHARD.

I know. At Kings. You shall be King, and I
Will be Lord Cardinal and crown you. See !
I'll make a crown out of this piece of paper.
[*Begins to fold it.*] What was that noise ? [*Starts.*]
[*Noise as of a door creaking.*]

EDWARD.

I think it was the river.
I often hear strange noises. Let us take
No notice of them. It will never do
[*With a nervous attempt to be brave.*]
For a Lord Cardinal to be afraid,
Much less a King who must defend his crown.

RICHARD.

There is that noise again ! I do not think
I like the Tower—it is so old and gloomy.

EDWARD.

And yet I recollect you told our father
That you *did* like it.

RICHARD.

So I did when he
Was by my side. But it seems different now.
I cannot think why Uncle sent us here ;
And keeps us here so long.

EDWARD.

'Tis only while
He makes all ready for my Coronation.
Then he will come—O will it not be brave ?
With trumpets and with banners and with soldiers,
And you shall ride upon a noble steed
Straight through old London streets to Westminster,
To see me crowned in good King Edward's chair.

RICHARD.

I wish it were to-morrow.

EDWARD.

But meantime
Let's *play* at Kings to while the time away.

RICHARD.

Yes. So we will. [*Resumes folding paper.*
O look, 'tis getting dark !
So dark I cannot see to make your crown.
Let's put off playing Kings until to-morrow.

[*TYRREL in black mantle appears at back.*

TYRREL.

[*Aside.*] Play it to-night. 'That morrow never comes.
[*Disappears behind a turn in the wall.*

RICHARD.

I'm sure I saw a shadow round that wall.
[*They involuntarily shrink close to one another.*
I wish we were away from this dark place.
[*Begins to cry.*

EDWARD.

No, dear, don't cry ! Perhaps we *shall* go home to-morrow.
[*Enter TYRREL.*]

TYRREL.

Yes, dears, yes. [RICHARD *shrinks from him.*
You're going home to-morrow.
[*Points down behind them.*

BOTH.

Oh, we're so glad !

TYRREL.

I have been sent to fetch you.
'Tis getting late. Will you not now to bed ?
Then swift to sleep, and dream of home and mother,
And wake—[*aside*—no more !

RICHARD.

Yes, wake to see dear mother.
[*With arms about each other.*]

EDWARD.

[*To RICHARD.*]

Courage, dear Richard, we are going home.

[*Exeunt, followed by TYRREL.*]

The scene is now darkened, and through a transparency in the stone wall there is seen the little chamber where the two PRINCES are sleeping in the moonlight that falls from the window; RICHARD wakes and starts up screaming: waking EDWARD.

RICHARD.

Oh, I have had a dream—a frightful dream!
I dreamt I saw a figure all in black,
With long and skinny arms, that came to us
And snatched us both away, and carried us
Far, far from home and mother—oh, so far
That we could never come back any more
And never see our mother's face again.
Oh, I'm so frightened!

EDWARD.

Don't be frightened, dear,
For dreams are nothing.

RICHARD.

No, I know they're nothing.
And yet this dream appeared so very real.
And see! it *was* real. Look! Oh, what is that
Which steals from out that shadow of the wall
Into the moonlight? 'Tis the same black shape
The very same I saw. It comes this way!
Oh, I'm so frightened!

[*Both cover their faces with the bedclothes.*]

TYRREL.

I am that shape of black,
And a black deed I do. Hide thee, thou moon!
Hide thy pale, peering face in night's black veil,
Hide it until 'tis done!

[*Smothers them, and steals off.*]

SCENE II.—*The Jerusalem Chamber. The QUEEN is discovered sitting on the rushes, alone and desolate. Red light from the fire on the*
QUEEN.

QUEEN.

No tidings yet of my poor helpless children!
Their uncle crowned—the King, *my son*, a captive.
O dreary day, when from the neighbouring Minster
Broke on my ears the music and the shouts
Of the grand coronation; and I knew
That they were not for *him*, whose right they were.
No banquet was prepared for him, poor child!
Nor invitation given him to the feast
That consummated all another's joy;
But in the Tower forsaken and forlorn,
He languished like a little prisoner,
Forgotten, as it seemed, by all the world,
By all except his mother, who, alas!
Could not come to him in that desolate hour
To share his tears, and love and comfort him.
'Tis all past now, and I could e'en endure
The treachery, would Richard but return
The precious loan I lent him for his purchase—
My double loan, those two poor, helpless children.
Oh, their dear faces! When will they come back?

Ah, when? P'r'aps never! When I ask of them
Their uncle tells me they are well and merry—
Always the same reply, "They're well and merry."
Methinks they should be neither. For they must
Long for a mother's care, a mother's kiss,
Mere infants as they are. O when? when? when
Will they return to cheer my desolate heart?
Perchance the monk who kindly undertook
The gracious errand of discovery
May soon return. He should be here ere this.

[Enter ABBOT.]

ABBOT.

One from the Council, madam, seeks speech with you.

QUEEN.

Admit him, reverend father.

ABBOT *admits him. Exit ABBOT. The MES-*
SENGER from the Council bows to the
QUEEN.

QUEEN.

[*Curtseying to him.*] Sir, your servant.

MESSENGER.

I am commissioned by the Council, madam,
To inform you, the High Court of Parliament,
On information laid before the House
By Bishop Stillington, to the effect
That on a certain day the late King Edward
Was wed in secret by the Bishop's hands,
Before his union with you, to one
Called Lady Eleanor Butler, whereby, madam,
Your marriage with the King was rendered null,
That, on that evidence before it laid,
The Court of Parliament, in both its Houses,

Pronounces your said marriage with the King
Illegal, and the children of your body
Unlawfully begotten.

ELIZABETH, *who has entered during this speech
and stood listening in the background,
with great agitation, now exclaims with
horror.*

ELIZABETH.

Mother !

MESSENGER.

[*Continuing.*] But the King—
[*Uncovers his head at his reference to the King.*]
Heaven bless him !—of his royal clemency—
Has ordered that an annual allowance,
Sufficient for your rank as *gentlewoman*,
Be made, and duly paid to you and yours
Out of the Royal Treasury ; and will,
Moreover, find a husband suitable
To her said rank, and state of *gentlewoman*,
For Mistress Grey, your daughter, falsely called
The Lady Elizabeth, Princess of England.

*The QUEEN, who has seemed to reel and stagger
during this speech, now by a great effort
recovers her self possession.*

QUEEN.

Now can I track this crown'd robber's course,
From step to step right up to Edward's Throne.
My son he has declared unlawful born
That he may never have the right to say—
“ Deliver up the Crown—for it is mine ! ”

[*Turning to the MESSENGER.*

Say to your honourable Council, sir,
And to the Court of Parliament, the *Queen*—
[*With majestic attitude and tone.*]
Received their information of the measure
Whereby they have defamed the memory
Of the dead king—*her husband*—whom alive
They durst not so defame. And for the grant,
Of Richard's charity vouchsafed to her,
She cannot take it on those terms. As for
The *Lady Elizabeth—Princess of England*,
Her troth is sealed; and she requires no aid
From your magnanimous master. Go!

MESSENGER.

Fare thee well,

Dame Grey.

[*He goes out.*]

QUEEN.

Heard'st thou what that man said?

ELIZABETH.

But 'tis not true! O say it is not true!

QUEEN.

No, it is not. By all the saints of God,
Elizabeth, my daughter, 'tis not true.

ELIZABETH.

This is the last drop in our bitter cup,
To have our good name smirched with infamy—
A bitterness that in my wildest dreams
Of evil, had not loomed upon my thoughts.

QUEEN.

Sure 'tis enough to make thy father break
The ceremonies of the grave, to hear his wife
And children so dishonoured ; but, sweetheart,
Look up ! Though thy dear father's dead,
And can defend us, shield us never more ;
God lives in Heaven, the widow's judge and friend—
The Father of the fatherless ; and He
Will plead our righteous cause.

ELIZABETH.

But, mother, dear,
Who is this Bishop Stillington ?

QUEEN.

A man
Who was disgraced during your father's reign,
Bishop of Bath, keeper of Privy Seal,
And the Lord Chancellor withal. A man
Who was indebted to your Royal Sire
For every step of his advancement, dear.
And thus he shews his gratitude. He blasts
The dead King's memory, and destroys the fame
Of his poor wife and prospects of her children.

ELIZABETH.

But wherefore fell he out of favour, mother ?

QUEEN.

He broke the oath of his allegiance, child !

ELIZABETH.

And now the turn has come for his revenge,
And we are victims of it.

QUEEN.

Richard Gloucester
Must be hard driven for an argument
When he can found, on such a shallow lie
So grave an accusation. Anything
Is good enough to build up evil on.
O rotten basement to a rotten house !
This man who wrecked him on a broken oath,
Now by a false oath wrecks his betters. Why ?
To clamber on their wreck and save himself.
The doubly perjured knave ! A bishop, too !
May his robes tangle him as in a net ;
And when he next shall feed—*nay, fleece* his sheep.
Some eye detect the claw and ravenous teeth,
Cry “ Wolf ! ” and chase him from his bishopric.
But say *thou* dost not think his story true—
O say *thou* dost not credit it !

ELIZABETH.

Dear mother !
’Twere not thy fault if *’twere* true. But ’tis not.
I will not so dishonour my dead father
As to believe a tale that rests upon
The unwitnessed evidence of his enemy.
And such a perjured enemy ! God forbid !

QUEEN.

Dear, generous Bess ! Heaven bless thee for those
words !
They are a cordial to thy mother’s heart.
But do consider how improbable
The story is. Think you, had he been wed
’To any lady, she would not have proved
Her previous marriage, claimed him for her lord,

And sat down by his side upon his Throne
The Queen of England? Think you all these years
Would have elapsed and not a word been said,
A whisper breathed of this vile calumny?
But when the King is sleeping in his grave,
And his Queen fallen from her throne and power,
This long-hid traitor crawls from some vile hole
Where he has watched and waited for his time;
And to make friends with Richard, plants his foot
Upon our fallen heads, in hope to climb
The ladder whence he slipped, by crushing us
Into the mire; and flashing high above us,
In mean revenge and vulgar mockery,
His most ungodly mitre.

ELIZABETH.

Let him climb.
Hypocrisy is such a greasy ladder,
He'll slip again ere long.

QUEEN.

But, my dear child,
Prepare thee for the worst. We shall be scorned
By England now. Or, if not scorned, then pitied;
And pity shown to us who *were* so high
Will be as hard to bear as scorn—nay harder!

ELIZABETH.

Our conscious innocence will shield us, dear.

QUEEN.

It will; but, Bessie, 'tis for thee I grieve!
'Twill blight thy gentle life. Henry of Richmond
To whom thou art betrothed, when he shall learn

'That the High Court of Parliament assembled,
Has judged thee base-born ; will he not neglect
'Thy hand, and seek an equal, taintless bride ?

ELIZABETH.

O mother, think it not ! Has not he borne
Long years of exile ? And adversity
'Teaches men gentle lessons. Charity
And Justice 'mongst the rest.

QUEEN.

For your sake, dear,
I hope it may be so, and Henry prove
The spotless knight your maiden fancies paint him.

ELIZABETH.

He will, I'm sure he will ! Besides, last night
I saw Lord Stanley, Richmond's step-father,
And by the love he bore my royal sire,
I did adjure him to send Richmond word
Of the dark days on which our lives had fall'n,
And beg him as he loves me to come home
And cheer us in our sorrow.

QUEEN.

What said he ?

ELIZABETH.

He made a merry jest of it at first,
As men will jest with girls about such things,
Particularly old men who have reached
The yellow leaf, and therefore quite forget
How green and lively they were once themselves.
But after, when he saw a little tear

Steal down my cheek, he drew me close to him
 And kissed my brow and said, "Dear Bess, I will!"
 And after that I did not cry again.

QUEEN.

Then he will send?

ELIZABETH.

He promised me :
 And told me for my greater comforting
 He would despatch his squire, good Humphrey
 Brereton—

Keen as a fox is he, bold as a lion,
 And faithful as a dog—him he'll despatch
 To Brittany with letters from himself,
 [*Archly.*] And one from me if I should care to write,
 Bidding my Henry come and wed his bride.
 And there's a little something in my heart
 That tells me he will come.

QUEEN.

And so he will,
 And make thee happy as thy mother—*was*.
Enter ABBOT.

ABBOT.

Can I have private audience with your Grace?

QUEEN.

Most certainly, good father.
 [*To ELIZABETH.*] Give us leave,
 And presently return to me again. [*Kisses her.*]
 But go not forth of this secure abode.

ELIZABETH.

No, though I often watch the homeless sparrow
 That builds beneath these eaves, and to and fro,

Flies as she lists from shadow into sun
And back from sun to shadow ; and wish I
Were free to come and free to go as she.
[*She goes out.*]

ABBOT.

Your messenger has come back from the Tower.

QUEEN.

What news ?

ABBOT.

None, madam, none ! [*Aside.*] Or news so bad
I durst not break it to her.

QUEEN.

Has he not
Seen, or heard aught from my dear children ?

ABBOT.

No !

QUEEN.

Could not the sentinels give him any word ?
Could they not tell him how they were ? when last
They saw them—heard of them ?

ABBOT.

No, madam, no.

QUEEN.

Alas ! Those huge stone walls, how dumb they are !
When I crept there in the deep dead of night
Cloaked as a nun, and shivering like a thief,
Only to look upon the frowning towers
That held my precious babes, I could have rushed
Upon their silent, sullen battlements
And dashed my brains out, I was so distraught,
So mad with misery, had not the thought—

The dear, delightful thought, broke on my grief
 "Perhaps I shall receive them soon." And since
 I've fooled the time, and cheated my poor heart
 With the sweet whisper "P'r'aps they'll come to-
 morrow !

To morrow ! and to-morrow ! and to-morrow !"
 But still that morrow comes not, and my heart
 Sinks sometimes with the fear 'twill never come.

[*Weeps passionately.*]

ABBOT.

[*Aside.*] 'Tis cruel to prolong this misery ;
 Better one swift, sharp pang, though it should rend
 Her heart, than these long, lingering tortures which
 Will bear her to her grave. [*To her.*] Madam, your
 grief

Is not unshared You suffer not alone—
 Full many are there who pass anxious days
 And restless nights on your behalf.

QUEEN.

Kind souls !

Heaven bless them ! May a mother's prayers call
 down
 Unnumbered blessings on their gentle heads !

ABBOT.

The people, far and wide, partake your grief,
 I might even say your "fear."

QUEEN.

[*Startled.*] Fear ! What think they ?

ABBOT.

They think it strange, somewhat mysterious,
 That the young Princes should be held so long
 In durance in the Tower.

QUEEN.

Strange? More than strange!
Say cruel! Barbarous!

ABBOT.

They do say so.

QUEEN.

Then they have not forgotten their poor Queen?

ABBOT.

No, madam! On the contrary, I think
You never were in people's thoughts and hearts
So highly throned, so loyally loved, prayed for
So constantly as now. The English have their faults,
But only let them scent out an injustice,
And every harsher feeling melts in pity,
Nor will they rest until the right is done.
Madam, they have forgotten you're a Queen,
They see in you only the woman now,
And the bereav'd mother.

QUEEN.

Reverend Sire,
Thou dost me good to say so! So much good!

ABBOT.

Rumours have got abroad, dark hints are uttered:
Men whisper one another in the streets;
Meetings are held in secret; women weep,
And little children cling to one another; tales
Are told of treachery, of cruelty, of wrong—

[QUEEN *interposes an exclamation of horror.*]

I say not, madam, there is truth in them;
But people *will* talk, and the public tongue
Not even a *King* can tie.

QUEEN.

O father! father!
These fears are but the echo of my own.
Thank God my heart that has so long been breaking
In solitude and silent agony
Has found an answer in the world at last.

ABBOT.

And such an answer as is like to make
A question; that the King upon his Throne
Will have to answer, to our satisfying,
And his own clearing before God and man.

QUEEN.

Father, what mean you? I perceive there lurks
Some fearful knowledge in your eye! What is't?
Oh, tell me! Though it kill me! Tell me all!

ABBOT.

Madam, your sons are dead.

*QUEEN is for one moment petrified with horror,
then sinks on her knees.*

ABBOT.

Seeing our reverend brother's holy order
A servant of the Tower confessed to him
The secret that had weighed on him so long—
The dreadful secret of their murder.

QUEEN.

Edward! Richard! Oh,
I ne'er shall see you more! O I was mad
To give thee up, my pretty boy! My heart
As by a fearful instinct boded ill,

And yet I sent thee to the slaughter-house.
 Inhuman wretches who have spilled the blood
 Of such a princely pair ! Inhuman King !
 " King," did I say ? No, God forbid these lips
 Should ever call him King who slew the King,
 And wears a crown that drips with innocent blood.
 Blood of my slaughtered babes ! May every drop
 Trickle down liquid fire, and seam his brow,
 And fret his cheeks, with channels of deep care,
 And dark remorse, until he sit the throne
 Self-stained a murderer ; and every eye
 Shall see the damning mark upon him set,
 And know it for God's thunder-brand, and say,
 " Behold another Cain ! "

ABBOT.

Have courage, madam !
 Have courage ! Doubtless Richard Gloucester
 thought
 In making base-born children of your sons
 He'd make them worthless in our England's eyes,
 And either people would forget to ask
 What had become of them, or learning it,
 Would reckon it a matter of no weight.
 But 'bide a little ! And in England's wrath
 And the Usurper's ruin thou shalt see
 God's Justice holds the scales, and bears the sword
 In Heaven. [*He goes out.*]

QUEEN.

O God !
 Where were Thine Angels in that dreadful hour ?
 The Angels that protect our little ones
 When harm is near and help is far away.

Enter MONK announcing.

MONK.

The Duke of Buckingham !

Enter BUCKINGHAM. The MONK goes out.

BUCKINGHAM.

Madam, the Council

Have sent me to enquire wherefore you thus
Remain in Sanctuary.

QUEEN.

Surely the Council
Need not have sent so far ! The answer lies
Nearer the King than us.

BUCKINGHAM.

Consider now. Your tarrying in this place
Is a profession of your want of faith
In the King's honesty ; and a sore wound,
Not only in his fame before the world,
But in his private heart. He is your brother.

QUEEN.

Is he, my lord ? I thought he had cut me off
From his most honourable relationship.

BUCKINGHAM.

Under your favour, sister, he was driven
To that hard measure by the evidence
Which Bishop Stillington had laid before him.

QUEEN.

My lord of Buckingham, pardon the question,
Are you a knave ? or are you but a fool ?

BUCKINGHAM.

Neither, I trust.

QUEEN.

Yes, one you must be. Either
A partner in his villainy, or else
A dupe of his devices.

BUCKINGHAM.

Pray explain !

QUEEN.

Why gave you your consent that he should take
Your nephew's Throne ?

BUCKINGHAM.

Because it was his right,
My nephew having been declared base-born.

QUEEN.

Base-born ! I have no patience with you, Duke !
Is my Lord Buckingham also one of those
Who can be hoodwinked by a knave's false oath
To be the accomplice of a public thief ?
O short of sight ! Brother ! you held his train
When he went up the Abbey to be crowned.
Had you been sharp of eye you had perceived
Shambling beneath its folds a cloven foot.

BUCKINGHAM.

Well, madam, in so far as I could judge,
There was great need, considering the state
Of national affairs, the Court intrigues,
And the vast ferment which the Civil wars
Had left in England ; there was urgent need
Of a strong hand, strong head, strong heart, to take
The helm of government, and Gloucester seemed

To be that same strong man. As God shall judge
me,
I had no end or motive but the good
Of England and the State.

QUEEN.

Alas, my lord !
Your judgment was the feeblest faculty
In your whole state of man. Now list to me,
And I will prove it. Tell me, have you seen
Your nephews lately ?

BUCKINGHAM.

No, madam !

QUEEN.

Or heard

From them ?

BUCKINGHAM.

No.

QUEEN.

Or of them ?

BUCKINGHAM.

No.

QUEEN.

Then, my lord,
You ne'er will see them—hear of them again.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why so ?

QUEEN.

Because they are dead.

BUCKINGHAM.

Dead ? Tut ! tut !

The idle gossip of the idle town.

QUEEN.

It has been solemnly affirmed to me,
By one whose word it were a sin to question.

BUCKINGHAM.

Dead ! Dead ! And we not been informed ?

QUEEN.

Informed !

Do thieves inform the watchman ? Or do wolves
Inform the shepherd of his lambs devoured ?
I say, my lord, my innocents are dead—
Most royally murdered, and the butcher sits
On England's Throne.

BUCKINGHAM.

Madam, I cannot tell
If grief or wrath o'er-masters me the more.
To make them base-born, this was hard enough ;
But, as it seemed, there was no remedy ;
But to destroy their innocent, gentle lives,
Who, base-born if they were, were the King's children,
And Gloucester's nephews, whom he swore to love
For his dead brother's sake ; and for his own
And England's honour, should have well protected,
This is a crime which clamours for swift vengeance.
Richard ! I was thy dupe ; but never more
Will I be counsellor, subject, friend of thine !

[To the QUEEN.

I am their uncle, Queen, as well as he !
One uncle murders them—the other will
Avenge their murder. Yes—[*Drawing his sword.*

I swear by Heaven,

This tongue, brain, hand, heart, never shall be dumb,

Idle, or satisfied, until or he
 Has bit the dust, or added to that crime
 A second murder—Buckingham's! [*He goes out.*]

QUEEN.

[*Passionately.*] Revenge!
 O precious balsam to a heart on fire
 With the fierce pangs of a remediless wrong,
 I feel thy sweet prophetic unction shed
 E'en now on this immedicable wound.

[*Then reflecting.*]

But there is work to do besides revenge.
 He *has* destroyed my sons. Farewell, sweethearts!
 Farewell, my fond, proud hopes! A last farewell!

[*Weeps.*]

But sorrow must not so unwoman me
 As to forget in my deep grief for them—
 [*Gathering up her courage for action.*]
 I have a daughter still.

Enter ELIZABETH, having heard the last two lines.

ELIZABETH.

Yes, mother, yes!
 Thy daughter and thy comforter till death.
 The priest has told me all the cruel news.
 O mother, what a dreadful world is this! [*Weeps.*]

QUEEN.

[*Caressing her.*] But let it not depress thy gentle
 soul,
 Nor overcloud unduly *thy* young life.
 Thy mother's heart must bear this grief alone
 While thou pursuest thy great destiny.
 For the one hope of the proud House of York

Lies now in Harry Richmond, thy betrothed.
 Content thee, dear, thou shalt be wed to him,
 And both our parties thou shalt merge in one.
 Go now and write thy letter to thy lord
 And bid him come and claim both thee and thine.

ELIZABETH.

I go ; but, oh, I would my messenger
 Had not so sad a burden for his tale. [*She goes out.*]

QUEEN.

I would he had not ! For to me, alas !
 It is a load too heavy to be borne !

*Sitting down, and relapsing into her former
 despair. Then rousing herself up as the
 thought of the revenge comes back to her.*

But what have I to do with tears ? Weak tears !
 Refuge of fools and cowards ! The she-bear
 Robbed of her cubs rages until she rends ;
 As I will do ! [*Appealing with uplifted eyes.*]

Edward and Richard, hear !

If your pure spirits hover round me, hear !
 If in your incorporeal essences
 Ye still commune with mortals, hear ! O hear !
 Your death shall be avenged ! Your mother swears
 By the dear tie on which Fate hath no power,
 She will not rest till blood has paid for blood ;
 And in the seat where Murder's sceptred pomp
 Swells its unchallenged pride, Justice shall rise
 In Majesty supreme, and smite the head
 That Sin, in mockery, has crowned for Doom,

Enter MONK announcing.

MONK.

His Grace, the King !

QUEEN.

The Usurper !

Enter RICHARD III. The QUEEN's face assumes an expression of intense but suppressed vengeance. The MONK goes off.

RICHARD.

How dost thou, madam ?

QUEEN.

As doth a bird robbed of her pretty brood.
I see thou hast not brought them with thee.

RICHARD.

No.

QUEEN.

Are they still well and merry ?

RICHARD.

Yes, madam, yes,
That they are well—quite well—I dare aver.
And they were merry when I saw them last.

QUEEN.

And prithee when was that ?

RICHARD.

With day and hour
I cannot charge my mind. But not long since.

F

QUEEN.

Have you not well nigh done with them, my lord,
Up yonder at the Tower? Methinks my Edward
Needeth not now to learn the art of kinghood
Since his dear uncle has proclaimed him base-born,
And eased him of the burden of his crown.
And as for Richard, he's so young and tender,
'Tis cruel to keep him from his mother's side,
Howe'er his brother loves his company.

RICHARD.

Have patience, madam, they will come anon!

QUEEN.

Ten months ago I had a store of patience,
But I have lived on it so long, 'tis quite
Run out. I'm rich now only in Despair.

RICHARD.

No more of this! I came to ask you, madam,
To quit this Sanctuary and to cast
Yourselves on my protection.

QUEEN.

Now, my lord,
I make a bargain with you. Send for me
My sons, your nephews, and I swear to take
Each of their little hands in mine, and they
Shall lead me out.

RICHARD.

O this is folly, madam,
They cannot.

QUEEN.

Why?

RICHARD.

I give no reason, madam,
'Tis inconvenient that I tell you why.

QUEEN.

Shall I tell you the reason why?

RICHARD.

Ay! ay!

QUEEN.

Because their little hands will never take
Their mother's hand again—because they *are dead!*

RICHARD.

[*Aside.*] How knows she this?

[*Nervously.*] You have been misinformed.

[*Summoning an artificial heroism.*]

QUEEN.

If they are not dead, there's a speedy way
To prove that they are not. *Produce them!* No,
You will not, for you cannot. They are dead!
“Dead,” said I? Murdered! If you ask by whom
I answer as the prophet did of old,
“Thou art the man!” O thou base, bloody Richard!
That call'st thyself a King and wear'st the crown
That was my child's; thou traitor, rebel, robber,
Tyrant, usurper, murderer, devil! hear
A mother's curse, and midst thy royal pomps
Some demon bear the echo to thy heart
And make thee tremble! May'st thou live to feel
The anguish of Remorse! By day let Fear
Follow thy steps like a black, ominous shadow!
By night let Dreams affright thee in thy sleep

And phantoms haunt thy pillow ! May the crown
Be like a ring of thorns about thy head ;
Nay, knotted snakes, and every gem a sting,
And every sting, a quenchless, deathless fire !
Thy Courtiers be a nest of serpents round
The Throne ; to tempt thee with their subtle craft
Unto thy doom ! And when thou seek'st their aid
May they hiss at thee with their double tongues,
Wind their deceitful coils about thy heart,
And crush thee ! Cursèd be thy son—thine heir—
And may he perish ere his time, like mine.
And when thou hast endured all griefs, all woes
That can afflict a King, and make a crown
A burden and a torment, may'st thou die—
Defeated, and dishonoured, and cast out—
Slain like the bloody murderer thou art,
And buried with the burial of a dog !

RICHARD *has sunk to the ground, cowering beneath*
the QUEEN, who towers above him with a
menacing and triumphant attitude.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Outside the Abbey. Same as in Act II.*
Enter GLOUCESTER and TYRREL.

GLOUCESTER.

They have at last ventured to come out of Sanctuary : and to-night—Is there a moon to-night ?

TYRREL.

A new moon that gives no light, and sets by candletime.

GLOUCESTER.

To-night seek out the Lady Elizabeth. You know her lodging-place ?

TYRREL.

I do, your Grace.

GLOUCESTER.

Seek an audience with her. Alone, if possible. And if you cannot persuade her to go with you to my Castle at Sheriff Hutton ; be someone at hand with horses saddled, and men to help, and carry her thither, as the devil carries his own.

TYRREL.

Consider her, your Grace, already there.

GLOUCESTER.

To separate her from her mother—for what can one do with the chick when the hen is clucking about it?—and to divide her from her party, who are watching me like hawks—this is the only way whereby I can subdue her to my will, and defeat the designs of my enemies—her friends. But see! By all that's marvellous! here she comes; and alone. Away and fetch some men at arms. Then if I fail to persuade, the remedy is at hand.

[*TYRREL goes off.*]

Enter LADY ELIZABETH.

GLOUCESTER.

How now, fair mistress Elizabeth? walking abroad, and alone?

ELIZABETH.

I have been to the holy father.

GLOUCESTER.

And now you encounter the holy uncle.

ELIZABETH.

[*With manifest aversion.*] Let me pass, I pray thee.

GLOUCESTER.

Where goest thou?

ELIZABETH.

To my mother.

GLOUCESTER.

I prithee let me conduct thee.

ELIZABETH.

Nay, I prefer my own company.

GLOUCESTER.

A foolish preference. And disloyal withal. I am thy king.

ELIZABETH.

A king : but not *mine*.

GLOUCESTER.

No insolence, mistress Elizabeth Gray.

ELIZABETH.

Art thou not afraid so to address thy dead brother's lawful daughter ?

GLOUCESTER.

I am afraid of nothing.

ELIZABETH.

I cannot make the same boast : for I am afraid of *thee*.

GLOUCESTER.

Be not afraid of *me*. I am thy protector.

ELIZABETH.

Protect me then I pray thee from thyself.

GLOUCESTER.

I will if thou wilt go far enough to enable me to do it.

ELIZABETH.

The farther from thee the better.

GLOUCESTER.

Why, Bessie, thy humour jumps with mine. I have a Castle in Yorkshire. Is that far enough? 'Tis a fair place withal, fit for the daughter of a dead king. The air is fresh, the situation good, the country pleasant, and no one there to dispute thy sweet authority: no one but my servants who will be servants to thee; and wait on thy will as they wait on mine.

ELIZABETH.

I will not go.

GLOUCESTER.

What if I command thee?

ELIZABETH.

I shall appeal to those whose protection we enjoy. Didst thou not promise them that if we came forth of Sanctuary no harm should come to us?

GLOUCESTER.

No harm *shall* come to thee.

ELIZABETH.

I doubt thee, and refuse thee. I will not go. So let me pass.

GLOUCESTER.

Pass!

[*She hurries by.*]

ELIZABETH

I fear him as much as I hate him.

[*She goes off*]

GLOUCESTER.

[*Looking after her.*]

From Gloucester to Tyrrel. 'Tis a short journey, mistress Elizabeth Gray. And thou wilt be at Sheriff Hutton almost before thou hast recovered from the shock and the surprise. She were a clever wench who could outwit King Richard.

[*He goes off.*]

SCENE II.—QUEEN WOODVILLE'S *Lodgings. A scantily furnished room indicating the fallen fortunes of the QUEEN.*

Enter the QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Where is my daughter? I have searched everywhere. Find her I cannot. Oh, I fear some ill! That awful Duke! I have an instinct here [*laying her hand on her heart*] that tells me it is he. What shall I do? God help me! God help me!

[*Breaks down.*]*Enter a Sister of the Church.*

O sister, come to me! I need thy prayers, thy help, thy counsel. Hast thou seen or heard aught of my daughter?

SISTER.

Yes, I have discovered where she is.

QUEEN.

Where, sister? where? O tell me! Is she safe?

SISTER.

Safe—but far away.

QUEEN.

Far away! O God! But where?

SISTER.

At Sheriff Hutton Castle. Carried thither by mounted men—creatures no doubt of him who wears the crown.

QUEEN.

O let me go to her! Though it should be on foot and all alone: still I must go.

SISTER.

They will not let thee in.

QUEEN.

I will disguise myself. Lend me thy cloak and hood: they will not know me habited like thee.

SISTER.

Most willingly.

QUEEN.

Heaven's blessings on thee, holy sister.

SISTER.

Come to my convent. I will furnish thee with all thou needest. And Heaven prosper thee!

QUEEN.

And reward *thee*! for I am poor and cannot recompense thee as thou deservest; and as I desire.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in Sheriff Hutton Castle, Yorkshire. Old-fashioned window at back. Door leading to Ante-chamber right. Door leading to corridor left. Old-fashioned couch left. Chairs, table, etc. right. Tapestryed walls. Time, night. Storm is heard without, with thunder during scene; but at the opening, it is clear, with full moon seen through casement.*

[*The LADY ELIZABETH is discovered alone, sitting.*

ELIZABETH.

O that we had not left the blessed shade
Of Holy Westminster! For there at least
We were secure. Since never tyrant dare
Invade its dread asylum or disturb
Its consecrated calm. What have I gained?
Only another prison-house; and that
No Sanctuary with a holy brotherhood
To minister and comfort; but a strong
And guarded castle where th' Usurper holds
An undisputed sway, and works his will
In secrecy and silence. I might be
Murdered within these thick and gloomy walls
As were my brothers in the Tower, and none
Know of the deed until my very name
Had faded from the memory of men.
I never go to rest without the fear
That some concealed assassin may steal forth
At midnight, and with silent hand draw back

The curtains of my bed, and in my heart
Plunge his sharp dagger.

[*The wind is heard howling without.*]

What was that—that noise?
'Twas but the ivy rustling in the wind,
And tapping at the window.

[*Lightning and distant thunder.* ELIZABETH
getting up and looking out of the window.]

Ah! A storm
Is rising! How the lightnings flash and glare!
I feel so lonely in these desolate wilds;
And on a night like this, the solitude
And desolation of my spirit seem
To find a shape and an embodiment
In the dark desolate scene without. Sometimes
Even when all is beautiful and calm,
And the moon sheds her clear untroubled rays
Through yonder casement, washing all the floor
With liquid silver, if a poor stray moth
Beat round the tapestry with velvet wings,
Or frightened mouse dart 'cross the floor, I shake
As if a murderer started to my elbow.
Why has he sent me hither? Sure he plots
Some mischief towards me. O my Henry! Rich-
mond!

Didst thou but know where thine Elizabeth
Now wastes and pines, methinks thou wouldst break
through

All perils and all foes to reach her side
And rescue her. Alas! I fear all hope
Of his return is gone. When Buckingham
Rose up in arms, and the fierce tempest swelled
The brooks to torrents and the streams to seas,

And wasted all his hosts ; then swept the sea,
And scattering Henry's vessels drove them back
Disabled, broken, to the shores of France,
All hope of his return fled with the storm,
And left in me the calm of blank despair.

Enter BRIDGET.

BRIDGET.

Madam, a messenger has come post-haste
Bringing intelligence His Grace the King
Is on the road, and bidding us prepare
Mistress Elizabeth to receive him.

ELIZABETH.

[*Startled.*] Oh !

He comes ? What for ?

BRIDGET.

To honour *you* no doubt.
Are you not very glad and very proud ?

ELIZABETH.

Oh, yes—that is—no doubt it is an honour,
But it is so unexpected—so—so—sudden.

BRIDGET.

But sudden pleasure is the best of pleasure !
Oh, yes ! If I'm to have a bit of pleasure,
Give it me sudden.

ELIZABETH.

I'm so unprepared !

BRIDGET.

And you don't stir to *get* yourself prepared.
Why don't you bustle about, tie up your hair,

Put on your velvet gown, new petticoat,
Rings, bracelets, necklet, and all other gear
Needful and proper for a maid to wear
When comes a gentleman to visit her,
That gentleman the King?

ELIZABETH.

O these will serve !
He can't expect a humble *gentlewoman*,
And she a Captive, will adorn herself
Like a great Lady of the Court. Oh, no !
The daughter of the Queen of England might—
Mistress Elizabeth Gray does not aspire
To ape the airs of those so high above her.
[*Satirically.*]

BRIDGET.

Well, as you please, young lady, as you please ;
But do you as *you may*, you shall see *me*,
With a face shining like a silver mirror,
A cap as white as January snow,
A gown sweet-smelling as a hawthorn bush,
A petticoat bright as a new-blown rose,
Hair smooth and glossy as a dab-chick's back,
Outside and in as sweet and neat and clean
As a fair chrisom child, or 'kerchief white
Laid up in lavender. Oh, and I'm sure
He'll notice me. For by the holy mass,
I'll curtsey to him like a wagtail. [*She goes off.*]

ELIZABETH.

Ah !

Go thy ways, thou chattering magpie ! Go !

[*Thoughtful and troubled.*]

Comes here ! What purpose can he have ? My heart

Forebodes no good. Yet surely he durst not
 Thus take advantage of my helplessness
 To do me wrong? Did he not swear an oath
 Before the Lords and Bishops of the Realm—
 The Mayor and Aldermen of London City,
 That if we would come forth of Sanctuary
 He would not suffer any kind of harm
 To come to us? And would he dare to break
 His oath to *them*? That were to forfeit all;
 His crown and throne are staked upon that oath;
 The thought shall comfort me and give me courage.

[*The moon shines through the window and falls
 upon the floor.*]

Ah, see! The storm has cleared. The moon shines
 forth
 And paints upon the floor her silver face.
 So may these clouds of doubt and darkness clear
 From off my heart, and leave me calm and bright
 Like yon untroubled heaven.

Re-enter BRIDGET.

BRIDGET.

Madam, a man!

ELIZABETH.

Why, Bridget, what dost mean?

BRIDGET.

I say a man!

One Master Humphrey Brereton, an Esquire
 Of my Lord Stanley, Steward of the Household
 Of our most blessed and most gracious King,
 Desires to bring to you a royal message.
 Oh, madam, how you're honoured!

ELIZABETH.

[*Joyfully.*] Oh !

Admit him !

BRIDGET.

So you're pleased at last! I knew
That I should stir you up. Now won't you don
Your finery to greet the King withal?
I know you will and do your waiting woman
Some credit with His Highness.

ELIZABETH.

[*Impatiently.*] O go ! go !

Admit this gentleman! May be he brings
Some most important message from His Grace!

BRIDGET.

Ah, yes! May be he does! I'll trot him in!
[*She goes off.*]

ELIZABETH.

A message from Lord Stanley ! 'Tis some word
From Henry doubtless. O make haste ! make haste,
Good Master Brereton ! Like an Angel's face
Will thine be to my weary, waiting heart !

Re-enter BRIDGET, *admitting* HUMPHREY
BRERETON. *Exit* BRIDGET.

ELIZABETH.

O Master Brereton! What's thy news? Speak!
 speak!
 Good news! I see it in thy merry eyes!

BRERETON.

Yes, my dear Lady ! 'The good Earl of Richmond—

ELIZABETH.

Yes! yes!

BRERETON.

He's coming!

ELIZABETH.

O dear Master Brereton,
How happy you have made me! When? O when?

BRERETON.

Immediately. He's on his way. Our friends
In France—they're spies, but never yet did spies
So good a work—they've sent us secret notice—
And here's a letter *he* has sent to thee,
Enclosed in one his mother had from him.

ELIZABETH.

O give it me! Why gav'st it not before?

[*She kisses it and opens it hastily.*]

Thou should'st have given it to me first of all!

BRERETON.

I couldn't wait for that!

[*ELIZABETH reads her letter.*]

I felt, my Lady,
I must be *first* to break the news to thee.
For did I not go over sea for thee
To find thy lord? And was not I the first
To take thy love to him, and bid him home?
And did not I convey to him thy ring
Which when he saw he put it on his finger,
And kissed a hundred times as 'twere the hand

Of the dear Lady that had worn it? Oh,
I thought I'd earned the right to be the first
To say to thee, "*He comes!*"

ELIZABETH.

Indeed thou hadst!
Forgive me, Master Brereton. Next *my* lord
And *thine*, I do esteem thee for thy love.
Hear what he says—thou hast a right to hear.
I cannot read thee all.

BRERETON.

[*Aside.*] I swear she cannot,
And will not if she can.
[*To her.*] Madam, thy dog
Will be contented with the crumbs.

ELIZABETH.

[*Reading.*] He says,
"Have courage yet a little while; and if God
permit, I shall shortly be in England to do battle
for thy just rights and mine; and after, as soon
as conveniently may be, make thee my wife, and
Queen of England, according to my troth plight and
promise made."

BRERETON.

May he kill the giant, madam, break open the
Castle, and rescue the beautiful Princess, like a true
knight and paladin of old. And now having done my
work, I must be gone! Hast any message to my
good Lord Stanley?

ELIZABETH.

O yes! My deepest thanks! My heart's dear love!
And tell him that I hope to call him soon
"Father" as well as friend.
[*Solemnly.*] Father, in place
Of him that's gone.

BRERETON.

I will! Farewell, my Lady!

ELIZABETH.

Farewell, good Brereton! I'll remember thee
When it is well with me!

[*Offers her hand, he kisses it.*]

BRERETON.

That will be soon!

[*He goes out.*]

ELIZABETH.

He comes! He comes! And with him comes my
day!
Break, blessed day, so long delayed! O break!
And bring the fulness of my hope, the noon,
Of my delight, the summer of my dreams!
Ye winds be kind! Ye waves be calm! O waft
The exile home! The Monarch to his crown!
The husband to his Bride!

[*Sings to her lute.*] *

* Recite this as a poem if the Artiste cannot sing. Or
have it sung off: she playing in dumb show.

I.

The Red Rose is coming
 Over the sea ;
 The Red Rose is coming
 Over to me !
 Sails in the daybreak,
 Flags on the blue,
 Hither your way take
 Bold hearts and true !
 Hail the Red Rose,
 Battles to close !
 Over the sea ! Over the sea !
 Coming, coming, coming to me !

II.

The White Rose is blooming
 Here by the sea ;
 The White Rose is blooming
 Blooming for thee !
 Lips like a cherry
 Ripe for thy kiss ;
 Heart that is merry
 Bursting with bliss !
 Graft the White Rose,
 Battles to close !
 Here by the sea ! Here by the sea !
 Waiting, waiting, waiting for thee !

Oh me ! I am so weary and so weak !
 'This sudden ecstasy o'ercomes my strength.
 Would I could sleep the interval away,
 'This time of waiting, watching, and suspense,
 And waken but to find the battle done
 And he the Conqueror ! Come, gentle Sleep !
 Dear Messenger of Peace ! and bring sweet dreams
 To soothe my anxious thoughts and longing heart.

She composes herself on a couch. Sweet child voices are now heard singing, and the tapestried walls behind her grow transparent, through which are seen the spirits of the two murdered princes, clad in the habits in which the audience beheld them, but with golden crowns on their heads, holding the one a wreath of white, and the other a wreath of red roses ; which as the song ends they dexterously unite, and hold them over ELIZABETH'S head. Sung by voices behind if children cannot sing.

SONG.

I.

Sleep, sister dear !
 Fast goes the night !
 Weaves, sister dear,
 Red Rose and White.

II.

Dream, sister dear !
 Night has nigh sped,
 Wov'n, sister, dear,
 White Rose and Red.

III.

Wake, sister dear !
 New morning grows !
 • See, sister dear,
 Our " Double Rose ! "

[*As the song ends, the vision fades, and ELIZABETH awakens.*]

ELIZABETH.

What bless'd vision have I, sleeping, seen ?
What bless'd music heard ? Perchance kind
Heaven

That oft has spoken to mortal men in dreams
Has spoken thus to *me*, and given my heart
A pledge of victory, and hope fulfilled.

Enter BRIDGET.

BRIDGET.

Madam, a sister of our holy church
Would speak with you.

ELIZABETH.

Admit her, Bridget !

BRIDGET.

Pray Heaven that *she* may teach you to be loyal,
And clothe yourself in all your bravery.
My teaching is of little use, I fear,
Or my example either. Here's the King
A coming, and she's as indifferent
As if he were the veriest Jack of knaves.

BRIDGET *admits the* QUEEN *disguised as a nun.*

[BRIDGET *goes off.*

QUEEN.

Heaven's blessings on thee, sweet one !

ELIZABETH.

Holy sister !
How much I need them, Heaven only knows !

QUEEN.

I knew thou must be desolate and sad
So came to comfort thee.

ELIZABETH.

'Thy voice is like
A ministering angel's to my soul !

QUEEN.

What ails thee, child ? Are they unkind to thee ?

ELIZABETH.

No, not unkind. Most courteous all of them ;
And yet I'm but their prisoner. For they watch
And follow me, and never leave my side
When I go forth, outside the guarded doors.

QUEEN.

Alas, poor child ! How do I pity thee !
Methinks thy thoughts must often wander home.

ELIZABETH.

O the dear music of the happy word !
Home ! Home ! Would I were there ! And yet
methinks
I have no home. Our home is broken up.
But where my heart is, is my home ; and that
Is with my mother wheresoe'er she be.
Though in a wretched garret she may hide
Her crownless head—yet that—that is my home !

QUEEN.

Thy mother ! Yes, she thinks about thee much—
Dreams of thee all the night, and meditates

On thee all day ; and never doth she cease
To bless and pray for thee.

ELIZABETH.

Dost thou know her ?

QUEEN.

Yes.

ELIZABETH.

Hast seen her ?

QUEEN.

Yes.

ELIZABETH.

O tell me of her !

How doth she ? Is she well ? Where doth she
live ?

And what is her condition ? Answer me
In one brief word, and tell me she is happy.

QUEEN.

[*Throwing off her disguise.*]

Elizabeth !

ELIZABETH.

[*Rushing into her arms.*]

Mother !

QUEEN.

O what delight

To hold thee once again close to my heart !
What miles I've travelled, and what perils dared
Of rain and storm and robbers to reach *thee*,
And hold thy loving cheek to mine like this ;

But this one moment makes amends for all.
It seems so long ago since we were parted.

ELIZABETH.

It does, dear! Oh, so long! So very long!
O let me look at thee! Methinks thou'rt wan,
And here and there a silver streak has stol'n
Into thy hair, dear mother! 'Thou hast borne
So much for *me*. O that it may be soon
Within my power to make thy days all bright,
And pay in gladness all thou'st lost in tears.

QUEEN.

Nay, I want nothing now except to see
Thee happy. My ambitious dreams are past.
I've seen the other side of the tapestry,
And Hope's deceptions can deceive no more.
If thou art happy, I shall be content.

ELIZABETH.

I shall be happy and victorious:
There's something in my heart that tells me so,
For I have had a dream—a lovely dream.

QUEEN.

What was thy dream?

ELIZABETH.

'Think'st thou canst bear to hear it?
'Twas of my brothers—Edward, and sweet Richard.

QUEEN.

Yes, tell it me! The memory of the dead
Is like a box of precious ointment, sealed:

Whene'er 'tis opened it diffuses round
 A heavenly fragrance that fills all the house
 And sweetens every chamber in the heart.

ELIZABETH.

Methought my little brothers came to me,
 Looking as they had never died ; so young,
 So beautiful, clad in the very dress
 In which we saw them last ; only they shone
 Amidst a heavenly light, and on their heads
 Wore crowns of golden glory. In his hand
 Each bore a wreath of roses red and white ;
 And, holding them above my head, they sang
 So sweetly of the union of these twain
 That in my ears the music lingers still,
 And sleeps there like a charm.

QUEEN.

'Tis a good omen :
 So treasure it. Who knows what heavenly spirits
 May come to us in sleep with messages
 From the great King, and Ministries of Love ?
 Sleep is the Border-Land 'twixt life and death ;
 And souls whose presence in the waking day
 We wot not of, we may commune with then,
 And be as 'twere translated.

*A knock. The QUEEN and ELIZABETH start.
 Re-enter BRIDGET. She is gorgeously arrayed
 to receive the KING as described in her
 former speech.*

BRIDGET.

Madam, the King.

The QUEEN withdraws into a room. As she goes, she exclaims to soothe her daughter's trepidation,

QUEEN.

Fear not, my child ! 'Thy mother will be near thee !

Enter the KING. BRIDGET curtseys to him several times in a comical manner. Then having failed to attract his notice, goes off with a dejected countenance.

BRIDGET.

[As she goes off.]

All this array and all these pains for nought !
Now were I not a woman I protest
I'd never put a brave gown on again ;
But woman without fineries is like
A wild duck without feathers—a poor thing.

[BRIDGET goes out.]

KING.

Well, Bess, how like you country life ? The air
Round here is sharp and shrewish. Yet methinks
Thy cheeks are paler than their wont ; but ah !
I had forgot. *[With a concealed irony.]*
They best become thee so,
Daughter and niece of the *White Rose* !

ELIZABETH.

[Aside.] White Rose !

There bit the asp. He knows my love for Richmond.

KING.

Thou dost not speak ! What ails thee ?

ELIZABETH.

Nothing. But——

KING.

But what ?

ELIZABETH.

Only, that with your gracious leave,
My lord, I should prefer the Town.

KING.

Is fortunate ! Why this
'Twas this I came for, Bess.

ELIZABETH.

[*Delighted.*] To take me back to London ?

KING.

[*Doubtfully.*] Yes.

ELIZABETH.

Oh, I'm so glad ! So very glad and grateful !

KING.

But stay. Only on one condition.

ELIZABETH.

Yes ?

KING.

That you return—*my wife*.

ELIZABETH.

[*Staggers back horrified.*] Your—your wife !
You have a wife.

KING.

I *had*! But she is dead.

[*Aside.*] I poisoned her that I might wed this
girl
And doubly seal my right to England's Throne.

ELIZABETH.

I do not understand. You are my uncle.

KING.

Oh, that is nothing!

ELIZABETH.

Nothing?

KING.

No. The Pope
Will grant a dispensation. What? amazed?
'Think you the Pope has power to loose the bonds
Of souls? And has not power to dissolve
Mere bonds of flesh and blood? Oh, folly, child!

ELIZABETH.

[*Aside.*] His wife! Heaven pity me!

[*To him.*] But—but—

I cannot!

KING.

No, you do not like me. Well,
That doesn't matter.

[*Aside.*] No. She loves another,
Young Harry Richmond, and she hopes to wed him,
And by the marriage of White Rose and Red
Steal all my people's hearts away from me;
But I'll forestall young Richmond. Blest are they
Who are in possession.

[*To her.*] Bessie ! Wed me first
And love me afterwards ! That's the short cut
To the Altar.

ELIZABETH.

But have you forgotten, sir,
I'm base-born ? Would you make a base-born girl
Your Queen ?

KING.

[*Confused.*] Oh, we'll find means to alter that.
We'll pass another Act of Parliament
And you shall be legitimate again.

ELIZABETH.

Can Acts of Parliament make fictions facts—
Facts fictions ? Either, sir, I am true-born,
Or I am not. You know I'm not base-born ;
But wrong and right with you are other terms .
For policy and convenience.

[*After a pause.*] Tell me this !
What is an Act of Parliament in *your* view ?

KING.

A mere machine to express and set in motion
The King's will. A kind of national clock
Of which the King's will is the wheels and springs ;
And the enactments of the same the hands,
That guide, direct, and regulate the world,
According to his policy and pleasure.

ELIZABETH.

That is it not, sir ; and the day will come
When Parliaments shall be the people's will
To unmake Kings whose thrones were won by fraud
And built in innocent blood.

KING.

This is mad talk !

ELIZABETH.

It may be so, I know not and I care not ;
But this I know, I am King Edward's daughter
In lawful wedlock born. Therefore, Lord Duke,
For King I call thee not, and never will,
I laugh at Acts of Parliament and scorn
His will that makes them. No, I'm not base-born :
I am Elizabeth, Princess of England !

KING.

No rudeness, insolent wench ! Dost thou forget
This is no sanctuary of Westminster ?
This is my castle, and I have the power
To force thee to my will.

ELIZABETH.

Was it for this
You lured me from that consecrated shrine ?
Severed me from my mother—sent me here
And shut me up a Captive ? Hear me then !
Though it should be my last word on the earth
I'll speak it ! Murderer of the Innocents !
Usurper of their crown ! Think'st thou I'd clasp
The hand that's dabbled with my brothers' blood,
Climb to the throne that's hollow with their tomb,
And call him "husband," whom with ceaseless cries
They call "assassin" from their unknown graves ?
No, kill me if thou wilt as thou didst them,
And fling me in some vile and nameless hole
Here 'neath the dismal dungeons of thy Castle,
But never shalt thou lead me to the Altar,

Never shalt clasp me with thy guilty arms,
Never shalt call me *lover*, no, nor *friend*!

KING.

Thou hast defied me! Learn then who it is
Thou hast defied! Even one who never yet
In war or love has known defeat, or left
A barrier standing 'twixt him and his aim.
If not my wife as friend, why then as foe;
And what thou wilt not give me I will take,
And force thee to the Altar.

Rushes towards her, seizes her, and swings her round.

The QUEEN rushes from her apartment, and throws herself between them. ELIZABETH clinging to her.

QUEEN.

What would you with that child?
Base murderer of my sons! You killed their bodies,
You shall not kill *her soul*!

RICHARD recoils from her with moral cowardice, the QUEEN defying him with an heroic attitude.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Bosworth. The tent of the LADY ELIZABETH—closed. Time—night.*

NOTE.—*There is a tradition that RICHARD took the LADY ELIZABETH with him to Bosworth Field—on that tradition this Act is founded.*

Enter BRERETON.

BRERETON.

How can I reach the Princess with my message?
A shrewd device of the Usurper 'twas
To bring her with him here. He was afraid
Richmond or Richmond's friends might steal her.
Sooth!

I'd like to have been the happy thief myself.
But they shall meet before the fight begins
If there's a spark of the fox left in me;
For if the Usurper wins they'll *never* meet,
And then—I fear to think—God help thee, child!

Enter BRIDGET from tent. She carefully closes it.

Here's the she-Cerberus that watches her:
I must prevail on her to let me in.
Could I have audience for a little while
With the fair Lady Elizabeth?

BRIDGET.

[*Sternly.*] No !

BRERETON.

Well, that's a good beginning certainly !
[*To her.*] Why not ?

BRIDGET.

Because the King has given me orders
To have her in safe ward.

BRERETON.

But you know me ?
I am Lord Stanley's squire and the King's friend.

BRIDGET.

But you're a *man* ! And no man may come nigh her.

BRERETON.

Are *you* included in that prohibition ?
May not a man come nigh to you ?

BRIDGET.

Oh, yes !

BRERETON.

Tis well !

BRIDGET.

Why so ?

BRERETON.

Because *I* may discourse with you
Without the fear that I may lose my head.
Although I fain would tell you privately
I have some time since lost my heart.

BRIDGET.

O Master Brereton ! *[Affecting to reprove him.]* You have ?

BRERETON.

[Aside.] I'll find the road that way
To the fair Lady Elizabeth, I warrant.

BRIDGET.

When was it, sir ?

BRERETON.

Why, when I first came down
To Sheriff Hutton Castle.

BRIDGET.

And you've kept
Your secret all this time ?

BRERETON.

I had no choice ;
But it has weighed me down most terribly.
It is an awful thing to be in love.
Could *you love*, Bridget ?

BRIDGET.

P'r'aps I could,
If I had anything to love.

BRERETON.

A man ?

BRIDGET.

O I could love a *man* !

BRERETON.

A soldier ?

BRIDGET.

I could love a *Soldier* !

Oh !

BRERETON.

An Esquire ?

BRIDGET.

I could love a *Squire* !

Oh,

BRERETON.

Me ?

BRIDGET.

I think I might !

BRERETON.

'Try then !

[*Spreading his arms and embracing her.*]

How dost thou like it ?

BRIDGET.

Very much !

BRERETON.

'They say "much would have more." Would'st thou ?

BRIDGET.

" 'Tis not within my heart to say thee 'Nay.' " I find

BRERETON.

O do not say it then ! [*Aside.*] By heaven she'd
fain

Make some amends for all the time she's lost.

BRIDGET.

[*Aside.*] Well, if I could not move the King, I've
moved
One of his officers—and that most deeply!

BRERETON.

Now as you love me let me see your Lady.

BRIDGET.

'Thou'rt honest? 'Thou'st no tricks?

BRERETON.

No, none at all.

I have but brought a message to her.

BRIDGET.

Well,

I'll do for you what for another man
I would not do.

BRERETON.

[*Aside.*] Unless he kissed her for it.
What doors a kiss will open with the women!

BRIDGET.

This way! [*Draws aside curtain of tent.*]

BRERETON.

Thank you!

[*Goes in and is about to close curtains and
leave her outside.*]

BRIDGET.

Oh, not alone, my Squire!
Not to have audience with another lady!
The impudence to leave me here outside!

[*She goes after him into the tent.*]

SCENE II.—*Near Bosworth Field. Trees in second groove, and back cloth with same. The night before the battle.*

Enter BRERETON, *conducting the* LADY ELIZABETH.

BRERETON.

This way, my Lady!

ELIZABETH.

O be careful, Brereton,
For if suspected, you will lose your life.

BRERETON.

And I might lose it in a poorer cause.

ELIZABETH.

But I should ne'er forgive myself!

BRERETON.

Then I'll
Forgive thee *for* thyself beforehand! Now
Art thou content? But they will ne'er suspect
The Squire of the High Constable of England.
Who ever could suspect a constable?
Especially the Lord *High* Constable?
Or Lord High Constable's *Squire*? And think
How very cleverly I've done it all!

[*Acting as if delivering a despatch.*]

Despatches from my master to the King!
One for the Lord Usurper—one behind
My back for *thee*!

[*Putting his hands out one before and the other
behind in a comical manner.*]

O you must allow
That I've some little talent for intrigue !
When you are England's Queen, I shall expect
To be an Ambassador at the very least !

ELIZABETH.

Yes, Brereton. Should there be a foreign King
To be hoodwinked, I will send *thee* !

BRERETON.

Madam,
I'll clap the hood upon the keenest hawk
That ever blinked his greedy eyes at England.

ELIZABETH.

But are you sure this is the place ?

BRERETON.

Oh, yes !
But we're before our time ! I always take
Things very calmly. Traitors should not hurry.
Besides I've heard it said, " He who believes
Shall not make haste." And, madam, I believe
Most piously in—*myself*.

ELIZABETH.

You know your name !

BRERETON.

Yes, madam, I'm a *traitor* ! And what's more,
I'm proud of it ! What is the King ? A traitor !
Should I disdain to wear his livery ?
Should servants better than their masters be ?
That were presumption. Yet I'm proud to say
I *am* his better in this pretty game,

For I shall beat him. O I love to play
The Devil's own trump-card.

ELIZABETH.

You'll never live
To be Ambassador Extraordinary.

BRERETON.

Then I shall die an extraordinary—
Falsehood teller. It's the same thing. And think
How skilfully I hoodwinked that Dame Bridget
Who waits upon and watches you. I vowed
I loved her as the apple of mine eye,
And kissed her till her cheeks were all aglow.

ELIZABETH.

O Brereton, fie on you !

BRERETON.

Ah, well, my Lady,
I never should have reached you otherwise.
She guarded you like the old Dragon watched
The gardens of the Hesperides. I saw
No arrow would kill her but Master Cupid's ;
But when I kissed her, down the Dragon dropped
And I walked in as Cupid's messenger,
With Richmond's love to you. And now, my Lady,
I'll tell you that which will amaze you more.
You saw how soon the Dragon fell asleep ?

ELIZABETH.

Saw with surprise. I would not have believed
I could have stolen off so easily.

BRERETON.

The stoup of wine I gave her—thirsty soul !

Had *that* within it which will make her sleep
So soundly that the battle's rush and roar
Will scarcely wake her up. Was it well done ?

ELIZABETH.

Must I say "Yes?"

BRERETON.

You must ! For all is fair
That furthers honourable love, and foils
Dishonourable purposes and men.

[*Looking off, admiringly.*] Oh, see !

Enter HENRY OF RICHMOND. ELIZABETH *rushes*
into his arms.

ELIZABETH.

Henry !

[HENRY *passionately embraces her.*]

HENRY.

Bessie !

[BRERETON *looking admiringly at them.*]

BRERETON.

That's Nature, that is ! And to see a hug
And kiss like that—it is a sight worth more
Than all the royal pageants ever shown
In London or in Westminster. I'll watch.
If the thief comes they'll hear the watch-dog bark.
[*He goes off.*]

HENRY.

How didst thou fare, dear Bess, at Sheriff Hutton ?

ELIZABETH.

O do not ask ! I have so much to tell thee ;
But the few moments we can spend together
Are far too precious to be wasted thus.
I was so anxious for a glimpse of thee,
Lest if the fight should go against thee, dear,
I might be taken back to Sheriff Hutton,
Or carried somewhere else, nor see thy face
For a long time—p'r'aps never !

HENRY.

Say not so !

If this right arm retain a particle
Of the brave blood of the great House that bred me,
I shall return to thee a Conqueror,
And claim thee for my wife.

ELIZABETH.

Heaven grant it, dear !

I will be *no* wife if I be not thine.
If thou should'st fall, I never will be *his*.

HENRY.

Whose ?

ELIZABETH.

Richard's.

HENRY.

What ? That murderer's wife !

It is too horrible ! No, Bessie, no !
Heaven will forbid this most unhallowed bond.

ELIZABETH.

Thou'rt all the world to thine Elizabeth.

HENRY.

How didst thou find thy way so far from home ?

ELIZABETH.

'Twas Richard brought me. "By my side," said he,
"She will alone be safe from the intrigues
Of Richmond's friends."

HENRY.

But not from the intrigues
Of Richmond's self, who finds thee in his arms.

Enter LORD STANLEY.

STANLEY.

It grieves me much to mar your conference ;
But word has just been brought into my tent
That Richard doth suspect my loyalty.

HENRY.

I wonder he has not suspected it
Before, considering all you've done for me
And my Elizabeth. [*Embracing her tenderly.*]

STANLEY.

It only shows
How easy 'tis playing traitor to a traitor.
But it perplexes me beyond my wont
To know what step I now must take. For listen !
My son, Lord Strange, is in King Richard's camp,
And there he holds him prisoner—a hostage
For my good faith. He swears that the first sign
Of wavering he detects in me, off goes
Lord Strange's head : so I must choose between
My son and stepson. The *first* dear to me ;

Thou, Henry, dear, unto my *wife*. Therefore
As dear, because *she* is so dear.

HENRY.

My lord,

You are sore-trying.

STANLEY.

I am. So if I seem
 To halt, or waver in my purpose, know
 I only 'bide my time.

HENRY.

I shall, my lord.
 My faith in thee is like a mariner's
 In the Pole Star. [*Bugle.*]

ELIZABETH.

And mine.

STANLEY.

Now hie thee home,

My Lady Bessie, to thy tent.

ELIZABETH.

Farewell,
 Dear Henry, mine ! [*Kissing him.*]
 Until we meet again !

HENRY.

Until we meet in Victory !

STANLEY.

[*Grasping HENRY by the hand.*] And thou,
 Dear Henry, hasten back to thine ! [*Bugle call.*]

HENRY.

And when we meet again, may it not be
In secret, 'neath the cover of the night,
But in the open face of honest day—
Joy in our eyes and victory on our helms,
And a long reign of peace begun for England.

HENRY and ELIZABETH *kissing hands to each other. Exit HENRY. STANLEY also exits by another way. BRERETON, who has re-entered, puts a cloak which he has been carrying over ELIZABETH. Bugle.*

ELIZABETH.

If we should meet that crafty Duke of Gloucester—
In getting to my tent, what *shall* we do?

BRERETON.

Leave that to me! I'll say I found my lady
A walking in her sleep. You must feign slumber,
And if you feign it half as well as I
Will feign your careful guide with "Hush" and
"Soft!"
"I prithee touch her not, your Grace, nor speak—"

Enter RICHARD.

BRERETON.

Talk of the Evil One!

RICHARD.

Ha! What is this?

BRERETON.

Hush, hush, your Majesty! I prithee hush!
I found my lady walking in her sleep,

And I'm conducting her, back to her tent.
 They say 'tis dangerous to waken one
 At such a time. Her eyes you see are open,
 But she is gazing upon vacancy.
 Soft! soft, your Grace! I prithee touch her not!
 I'll lead her safely to her tent again.

[*Guiding her carefully.*]

RICHARD.

I like not girls who glide about like ghosts.

[*RICHARD goes off.*]

BRERETON.

[*To himself.*]

Nor like I Kings who walk as haunted men.

[*To ELIZABETH.*]

I've hoodwinked him again! I am like Fate
 That blindfolds men before she strikes the blow.

[*They go off.*]

SCENE III.—*Same as Scene I. but with two tents.*

SENTINELS *walking up and down.* Time—
before daybreak.

*Enter the QUEEN. She is travel-stained and
 weary and disguised as a peasant.*

QUEEN.

I passed the sentinel. He was asleep!
 What blessed Angel sealed his weary eyes
 That I might come unchallenged on the field
 Where crafty Richard captive holds my child
 Pending the issue of the coming fight?

His cruel minions tore me from her arms
 And drove me forth to wander and to weep ;
 I've wept and wandered till I can no more.
 But now I soon shall find me among friends ;
 The noble Countess Richmond tarries near
 In some farmhouse upon this tented field.
 Lord Stanley secretly provided means
 Of travel and an obscure lodging-place :
 She could not 'bide at home ; but where her son
 Was fighting she must come. I'll go to her,
 She'll give me shelter from the battle storm ;
 And when 'tis over and the victory won
 For *her* dear *Henry*—*my* Elizabeth,
 I shall be near at hand to bless them both,
 And crown the joy that will accomplish mine.

[Is about to go, then pauses.]

But stay, my daughter ! She is somewhere near.
 Oh, could I see her—could I only get
 A little glimpse of her, 'twould make me glad.
 She is in Richard's tents ; but I will go
 Even there. What peril in the world can chill
 Or daunt a mother's heart ? And in these rags
 The guard would scarcely know me. I will try.

[Looks about.]

It must be one of those o'er which I see
 In the dim light the royal banner float.
 Perhaps I might persuade the sentinels
 To admit me on some plea. I'll venture it.

*As she is going up stage, enter RICHARD. She
 stands aside.*

RICHARD.

I have not slept ! I could not sleep ! The night,
 Once soft as falling flake on fallen snow,

Was full of fears, surmises, doubts, alarms :
 Now rushing in pell-mell—heralds of ill ;
 Now pacing with monotonous, heavy tramp
 Like sentinels of Doom that would not rest.
 I rose—came forth to breathe the morning air
 And with sharp action rouse my martial soul
 And purge me of the sickness bred of thought.
 I visited the sentinels at their posts—
 I found one sleeping—and I left him so :

[*Indicating with his dagger that he murdered him. QUEEN here indicates her horror in dumb show.*]

He will not wake again. "Take thou the rest,"
 Said I, "thou art so covetous of. And say
 Thy King gives liberally thy heart's desire."
 The grateful wretch heaved one deep sigh and—
slept.

But see ! "Twixt yonder riven veil of clouds
 Morn lifts her ponderous and prophetic lids
 Upon the dark and haggard brow of Night,
 And glares on me with wild and bloodshot eye
 That strikes my pulses cold.

Turns aside and discovers the QUEEN. She confronts the KING with witch-like manner, points her finger at him with weird gesture, then——

RICHARD.

[*With superstitious fear.*]
 What art thou ? A witch ?

QUEEN.

[*With weird voice.*] Where is thy son—thine heir ?

The curse was registered in Heaven. Thy son,
Thine *heir* is dead !

RICHARD.

[*Superstitiously.*] It is a witch !
And comes to daunt me here !

QUEEN.

Remaineth now
Only the line that ends the fatal scroll—
Thy death. As he is thou shalt be to-day.
The wails of Edward's sons are in the wind ;
Their phantoms hover in the morning air ;
Thy banners flap like night-birds round thy hosts ;
Above thy tent the raven croaks thy knell ;
Upon thy helm the grinning Spectre sits
And juggles with thy crown. Around thy heart
Fast as the minutes from Time's shuttle fly
Fate weaves thy web of Doom. The hour has
struck,
Prepare to meet thy Judge !

RICHARD.

[*With an effort to regain his courage.*]
Why do I quail ?
Before this witch's gaze ? I will not ! No !
[*To sentinels.*]
Seize me this woman ! Take her prisoner !
She is a witch !
[*They seize her.*] Hold her a captive men
Till I return and make my pleasure known.
Anon we'll light a fire on Bosworth Field,
With Richmond's broken banners for the fuel,
On which we'll burn her in our soldiers' eyes,
To warn all witches of their punishment

Who dare to cross the pathway of a King !

[*To himself.*]

Now to the fight and prove I'm still a man !

[*He goes out.*]

QUEEN.

[*To the sentinels.*]

O I conjure you, if you have a drop

Of pity in your hearts, release me, sirs !

I am no witch ! Look at me, men, and see !

[*Drops off her disguise, and shows herself in semi-royal attire.*]

I am the widow of your late King Edward,

Sometime your Queen. Only a woman now.

Behold I kneel to you—your Queen becomes

Your suppliant. Let me go ! O if you have

At home a gentle daughter whose dear face

You kissed at parting with a long farewell

That almost rent your stout brave English hearts

For love and loss of it—a face whereon

You dream all night, for which you long all day,

And in your dying moments should you fall

In this day's fight your heart would conjure up

To bless and soothe you to your last long sleep—

I pray you by your love of that dear child,

By all you feel of loss and loneliness,

By all you hope in your reunion,

In this world, or a brighter world to come,

Bring me to mine, and let me say I found

On Bosworth Field a true-born Englishman.

FIRST SENTINEL.

And so you shall !

[*Draws back the curtains of the tent.*]

Behold !

ELIZABETH is discovered asleep on a couch. She awakes and stands a moment struck with wonder. Then rushes into her mother's arms.

ELIZABETH.

O mother dear ! And on this fateful field !

QUEEN.

I recked not of it might I but reach thee !

Enter LORD STANLEY. He discovers the QUEEN.

STANLEY.

What *thou* here ?

QUEEN.

Hush !

ELIZABETH.

What news, Lord Stanley ?

STANLEY.

I'm perplexed beyond
All power of words. Having removed my troops
A little distance from the Usurper's ranks
To make my going over easier
When the time comes to join the Earl of Richmond,
I have confirmed the King's suspicion of me
And I much fear my son has met his doom.

[QUEEN and ELIZABETH utter an exclamation of
horror.]

Enter from the opposite side a MESSENGER

MESSENGER.

My lord, the Earl of Richmond by my mouth
Reminds you of your promised aid and begs
You come at once and cast your lot with him.

STANLEY.

Tell my Lord Richmond that the King has sent
A like demand for my immediate help
With threat to cut off my Lord Strange's head
At once if I refuse. Whereto I sent
A dubious answer to prolong the time,
And I but wait my messenger's return
To advance my standard. See he comes !

Enter BRERETON hastily.

Well, Master Brereton, what's the news ?

BRERETON.

My lord, he's saved ! When I pronounced your
message,
The enraged Usurper ordered the Lord Strange
To instant execution ; but Lord Ferrers
And other gracious lords and gentlemen
Urged him to wait, lest he should be mistaken
And stain his sword with murder. And God knows
It's stained enough with that !

STANLEY.

Thanks be to Heaven

That agony is past !

BRERETON.

He holds him still
As hostage ; but methinks, my lord, he'll be
A lucky man if he gets back to give
A second order, for he's in the oven

Of battle yonder. "Twixt him and Lord Strange
Flash a few hundred of the enemy's swords.
Oh, the old Boar of Gloucester—he'll be roasted
This time, my lord, and we shall all dine off
Boar's head to-day!

STANLEY.

Off goes the mask at once!
[*He goes off.*]

BRERETON.

The traitor King has found his match at last
In traitor Stanley and his honest Squire.
[*He follows STANLEY.*]
[*Noise of battle heard.*]

ELIZABETH.

[*Listening.*]

Hark how the battle rages! Mother, climb
That mound and tell me how it goes!
I dare not look!

[*QUEEN goes up an elevation.*]

Mother, what dost thou see?

QUEEN.

Norfolk and Oxford's troops strive hard.

ELIZABETH.

One from the other—friend from enemy?
How know'st

QUEEN.

By the devices on their banners, dear!
A silver lion is the Duke of Norfolk's,

A glittering star upon a field of blue
Is Oxford's.

[*Noise of battle.*]

ELIZABETH.

Look ! Tell me ! How fare they now ?

QUEEN.

Lord Oxford's glittering star flames up—

[*Tremulously.*] *With triumph.*
Mounts up again, now holds its course—
[*Triumphantly.*]

Now sinks. [*Despairingly.*]
Now rises into clear ascendancy

And sails along in triumph !

[*With great shout.*] Norfolk's down !
Victory to Oxford and to Richmond !

ELIZABETH.

Watch !

Take not thine eyes away ! Say how it goes !

QUEEN.

The Lion of the Percies stalks away
With most disdainful majesty and leaves
The Usurper in his hour of peril. Ha !
Another traitor to his Grace of Gloucester !
By Heaven, I think there be more friends to Rich-
mond

Than my Lord Stanley in the Royal Camp.
And now the boar of Gloucester is at bay :
As if dismayed by Percy's faithlessness
He stands a moment struck with doubt or fear ;
Yet but a moment ! Quicker than I tell

He rushes blindly, madly on the spears
 Of the relentless hunters closing round.
 On through their ranks he cleaves his furious way ;
 They break from him to right and left and leave
 A valley of death behind him ! Now he makes
 Straight for the noble Richmond !

ELIZABETH.

No !

Heaven grant he may not reach him !

QUEEN.

Or may meet

A Stanley there beside him ! [*Waving her hand.*

On, my lord !

A Stanley to the rescue ! On ! On !! On !!!
 Soldiers of Richmond bar the Usurper's way ;
 Ah, they are down, swept from his terrible path
 Like corn before the whirlwind With one blow
 Of his huge battle-axe he falls to earth
 Brave Richmond's standard bearer—cloven sheer
 From chin to chine ; and from the dead man's clutch
 He snatches the red banner, flaunting it
 Defiantly towards Richmond. On he speeds
 Swift, grim, and terrible as Death ; and on
 His helm, Murder Incarnate, sits enthroned !
 Ha ! they have met at last ! They stand ! They
 fight !

Richard and Richmond face to face like fiends.
 Their swords flash fast, and faster ; up and down—
 Thrust—parry—thrust again. Now Richmond
 seems

To lose his ground. Ha ! that was good ! a noble
 stroke !

Clash—clash—clash—clash—how swift the weapons
 fly !

And now a thrust—right home—he reels—he falls—
Victory! Victory! Henry is King!

*Great shout behind. ELIZABETH rushes up, they
kiss one another with a passionate embrace
and a loud cry of joy.*

QUEEN.

Thus do we show all tyrants in the world
That murderers in the Purple must be judged
Like murderers in rags, and that how'er
Kings flaunt their tyrannies in other lands
They must not, *shall* not do it here in England.

*[Then uplifting her eyes with tranquil voice and
manner.]*

Peace, gentle spirits! Rest for ever now!
Ye are avenged upon your murderer!
Your mother's vow is kept and all is well.
Sweet Edward! Gentle Richard! Rest in peace,
And from your bright, beatified abodes.
Breathe blessings on the Roses' union.

*Trumpets sound. Drums beat. Enter SOLDIERS
filling up background, bearing banners des-
cribed. The Star of Oxford, the Lion
rampant of Northumberland, and the
Dragon of Richmond quartered with the
Royal Arms of England. Then—*

QUEEN.

[To RICHMOND.] Hail, King of England, Rose of
Lancaster!

Receive the welcome of the Rose of York!

*[Presenting the LADY ELIZABETH, he embraces
her.]*

ELIZABETH.

[To QUEEN.] Now dry thine eyes, mother of many
 sorrows,
 For Richmond is henceforth a son to thee
 To guard thy head with all his kingly power.

RICHMOND.

No, say her daughter's arm will comfort her
 With its most Queenly Majesty. For thine—
 [To ELIZABETH.] The diadem is heiress of York and
 England.

ELIZABETH.

But henceforth there shall be no *mine* and *thine*
 'Twixt York and Lancaster; but only *ours*.
 And ours—not ours; but England's.

QUEEN.

[ELIZABETH and RICHMOND kneeling.] Yes!

[QUEEN standing behind.]

Our hearts one as our houses—may the ring
 That weds you be the marriage of the Land
 And sparkle on the finger of all Time
 The witness of its troth-pledge, and the seal
 Of everlasting union to our race,
 Who with a filial reverence shall say,
 “What God hath joined together let not man
 E'er put asunder,” and none know again
 Or Red or White, but only both conjoined,
 England's one perfect flower—“The Double Rose.”

[Placing her hands on the heads of ELIZABETH
 and HENRY, still kneeling.]

CURTAIN.

K

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

"THE DOUBLE ROSE."

"We have a very tender and pathetic picture of the last moments of Edward IV., who dies in the presence of the Queen, his children, Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York, and the plotting Gloucester. This forms the subject of the first act, which is certainly one of the most effective in the play, appealing as it does to the sympathy and arousing the interest of the spectators. The second act is devoted to the efforts of Gloucester to obtain possession of the infant Duke of York, for the purpose of committing him to the Tower with his elder brother, previous to their murder. In this act the anguish of the widowed Queen Elizabeth is depicted with rare power and pathos. In the fourth act there is a very striking vision of the young princes, who appear to the Lady Elizabeth in a dream, significant of the future union of the red and white roses by her marriage with Richmond; and the curtain goes down on a sensational scene. 'The Double Rose' is certainly a play of considerable power, and forms a fitting sequel to 'The Kingmaker.' It was received with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of approval, and the author had the satisfaction of being called before the curtain at the end of the third and fourth acts. Even although Mr. Boulding has not equalled Shakespeare, he has certainly scored a success of which he has much reason to be proud."—*Society*.

"The verdict at the end, pronounced by all sections of the house, was a thoroughly satisfactory one, and the author was fully deserving of the enthusiastic congratulations that attended him on his appearance before the curtain at the end of the play."—*Era*.

"Mr. Boulding is to be congratulated on his new historic play, 'The Double Rose.' It pleased the audience, and should stand no small chance of success."—*Sunday Times*.

"'The Double Rose' is rich in beautiful ideas admirably expressed."—*City Press*.

"'The Double Rose,' a new play by Mr. J. W. Boulding, is a sequel to 'The Kingmaker,' by the same author, and carries on the history from the death of Warwick, at Barnet Heath, to the death of the Duke of Gloucester, on the field of Bosworth. The Roses are, of course, those of York and Lancaster. The present work has much merit. The diction is nervous and harmonious, and no little skill of dramatic portraiture is shown in the drawing and colouring of the characters. The general verdict of the audience at the fall of the curtain was emphatically favourable."—*Morning Post*.

"'The Double Rose' was produced with every sign of approval from a large audience. The ground traversed by the new play is very nearly the same as that in Shakespeare's 'Richard III.'; but there is, fortunately, no resemblance whatever in the details. The first act deals exclusively with the final sickness and death of the fourth Edward. The method by which the interest is aroused in the fate of the royal house deserves commendation,

PRESS OPINIONS—*continued.*

and when the curtain has fallen upon the lifeless monarch, his weeping widow and children, and the dissembling Gloucester, one cannot but recognise that the author has opened his subject worthily and well. The second act has likewise but one theme: the efforts, at first foiled but finally successful, of Gloucester to gain possession of the person of the infant Duke of York; and again the climax is effective, as Richard carries off the child to join his doomed brother in the Tower. The third act is longer and more varied, but the scene is still in the Sanctuary at Westminster. The much-tried Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, is first informed that her marriage with Edward has been declared invalid, and then overwhelmed by the news of her sons' murder. The appearance of the hump-backed usurper, of course, gives occasion for a stormy scene, concluding with an effectively-written 'mother's curse.' The final act is one near the field of Bosworth, and the final tableau consists of the Queen dowager joining the hands of her daughter and Richmond. Such is the bare outline of the piece, but the success or failure of a five-act drama in blank verse depends upon matters quite distinct from the mere scenic arrangements. There are historical plays of the spectacular order, such as 'Kenilworth'; and there are others dependent entirely upon their literary merit, of which 'Charles I.' may be quoted as an example. Mr. Boulding's production belongs to the latter class, and is altogether a favourable specimen of its kind. The dialogue shows considerable polish, especially that allotted to the leading figure of the play, Elizabeth Woodville. We feel convinced the literary skill, dramatic feeling, and good workmanship shown in 'The Double Rose' will not be overlooked."—*The Referee*.

"Mr. Boulding writes good blank verse, often full of powerful imagery. As in the former case, Mr. Boulding's play was received by a very large audience, which frequently burst into rapturous applause. 'The Double Rose' is a well-written poetical drama."—*The Echo*.

"Effective scenes are caused by the mother's anguish, when, after taking sanctuary at Westminster, her younger son is torn from her to go to his little brother in the Tower, and when, subsequently, she learns from a sympathetic monk the fate that has befallen her off-spring. These scenes are well conceived."—*Times*.

"Mr. J. W. Boulding's new historical play, 'The Double Rose,' was produced yesterday with considerable success. The author was twice called before the curtain, and his play certainly deserves to be accepted as a regular attraction."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

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PRESS OPINIONS—*continued.*

Richard, Duke of Gloucester (Richard III.), on the bloody field of Bosworth. As we noticed very fully the previous work, we content ourselves with saying that in 'The Double Rose' there are very many instances of that lofty style and rich imagery with which Mr. Boulding has already made us familiar. Smooth blank verse is found throughout, and at times reaches to a very high standard of excellence."—*Weekly Times*.

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AT

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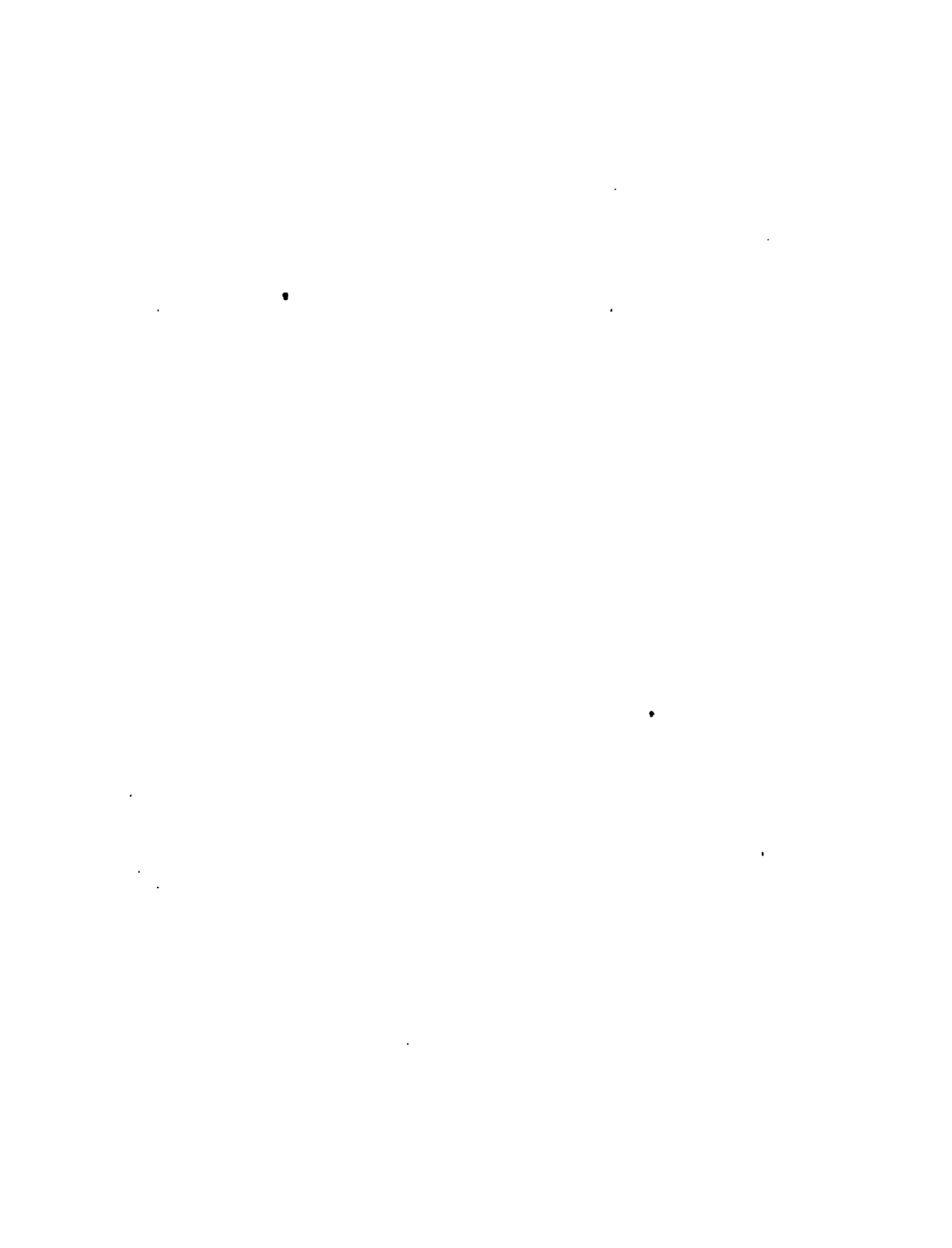












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